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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<p>File Ref. : HA/COM/2/2 VI Paper No. HA 79/96</p> <p>Minutes of the Meeting of the HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY held on Thursday, 26 September 1996</p> <p>---0---0---0---</p> <p>PRESENT</p> <p>Hon Rosanna WONG Yick-ming, CBE, JP (Chairman)  Mr J A MILLER, JP (Director of Housing) (Vice-Chairman)  Mr Victor H W SO, JP  Hon FUNG Kin-kee  Mr LEUNG Chun-ying  Ms HO On-nei  Mr CHAN Kam-man, JP  Hon LEE Wing-tat  Mr Daniel LAM Chun, JP  Mr YEUNG Ka-sing, JP  Mr Anthony WONG Luen-kin  Mr Joseph CHOW Ming-kuen, JP  Mr Raymond CHOW Wai-kam, JP  Ms SIU Yuen-sheung  Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok  Dr Hon CHEUNG Bing-leung  Mr WAN Man-yee  Mr CHAN Bing-woon, JP  Mr LAU Kwok-yu  Mr CHENG Kai-nam  Mr NG Shui-lai, JP  Mr Dominic WONG Shing-wah, OBE, JP (Secretary for Housing)</p> <p>ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES</p> <p>Ms LEUNG Wai-tung, MBE, JP (Out of Hong Kong)  Mr HAU Shui-pui  Prof YEUNG Yue-man, OBE, JP  Mr Nicholas BROOKE, JP  Mr Eddy FONG Ching, JP  Dr Joseph LIAN Yi-zheng  Mr Peter WONG Hong-yuen, OBE, JP (Out of Hong Kong)  Mr NG Leung-sing (Out of Hong Kong)</p>

Mr Bowen LEUNG Po-wing, JP (Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands)

Mr K C KWONG, JP (Secretary for the Treasury)

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Clarie LO (Deputy Director/Administration)

(Secretary of the Authority)

Mrs Fanny LAW, JP (Deputy Director/Housing Management & Works)

Mr R A BATES, JP (Senior Assistant Director/Maintenance & Construction Services)

Mr Stephen S C POON, JP (Senior Assistant Director/New Development)

Mr Marco WU, JP (Senior Assistant Director/Housing Administration)

Mr Y L CHAN (Assistant Director/Commercial Properties)

Mr C C HUI (Assistant Director/Applications & Home Ownership)

Mr Vincent TONG (Assistant Director/Maintenance)

Mr H T FUNG (Assistant Director/Regional Management (1))

Mr J J NG (Assistant Director/Regional Management (2))

Mr Edward LAW Wing-tak, MBE (Assistant Director/Administration)

Mr K H LAU (Assistant Director/Operations & Redevelopment)

Mr K T POON (Assistant Director/Information & Community Relations)

Mr Simon P S LEE (Legal Adviser)

Ms Mimi LEE (Assistant Director/Policy)

Mrs Doris MA (Assistant Director/Development)(Ag)

Mrs Lily TSANG (Assistant Director/Finance)(Ag)

Miss Sandy CHAN (Principal Assistant Secretary for Housing (2))

Mr PUN Wood-sun (Chief Housing Management/Kowloon East & West)

Mrs Winifred CHUNG (Principal Executive Officer/Management Enhancement Programme)

Mr Raphael LI (Chief Information Officer/News, Promotion & Marketing)

Mr William SUNG (Senior Executive Officer/Management Enhancement Programme)

Mrs Katherine YAU (Chief Publicity Officer/Community Relations)

Mr H B CHAN (Senior Housing Manager/Estate Management Advisory Committee)

Mr C Q LEE (Senior Housing Manager/Business Process Re-engineering)

Mr Lawrence CHOW (Committees?Secretary) (Meeting Secretary)

Mr Victor YIU (Assistant Committees?Secretary/2)

Miss Kathy NG (Assistant Committees?Secretary/3)

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45 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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The Chairman opened the meeting at 8:49 a.m. She welcomed Mr J A MILLER, Director of Housing, who attended the meeting for the first time. Apologies for absence were recorded from Ms LEUNG Wai-tung, Mr HAU Shui-pui, Prof YEUNG Yue-man, Mr Nicholas BROOKE, Mr Eddy FONG Ching, Dr Joseph LIAN Yi-zheng, Mr Peter WONG Hong-yuen, Mr NG Leung-sing, Secretary for the Treasury and Secretary for Planning, Lands and Environment.

2. The Chairman congratulated Mr Nicholas BROOKE, Mr YEUNG Ka-sing, Mr Eddy FONG Ching and Mr CHAN Bing-woon on their appointment as non-official Justices of Peace on 17 July 1996. The Director of Housing also congratulated the Chairman, who would be conferred a Doctor Degree of Laws, honoris causa, by the Chinese University of Hong Kong on 12 December 1996.

VALEDICTION

3. The Chairman informed Members that Mrs Fanny LAW, Deputy Director of Housing/ Housing Management & Works, would leave the Department on 28 September 1996. Members recorded a vote of thanks for her valuable contribution to the work of the Authority.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 1996

4. The minutes were confirmed and signed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 1996

5. Members noted Paper No. HA 60/96.

#### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

(AGENDA Rights and Responsibilities Item 3) (Paper No. HA 61/96)

6. Mrs Fanny LAW briefed Members on the paper.

7. Referring to paragraph 8 of the paper, Dr Anthony CHEUNG enquired which housing concern groups had been consulted on the document on the rights and responsibilities of the Authority's major client groups. He supported in principle to have such a document to improve communication between the Department and public rental housing (PRH) residents. He was of the view that it would be better to have a balance between rights and responsibilities. He considered that although a hotline on complaints was stated in the leaflets for individual client groups, detailed procedures should also be included in the leaflets to let PRH residents know the actions they could take or the more senior officers they should approach if the Department failed to meet the performance pledges in the leaflets. He also noted from the leaflet on repairs to public housing that the meaning of some phrases was ambiguous, making it not easy for PRH residents to understand the service standards of the Department. Besides, he doubted whether it was reasonable for Departmental staff to take an hour to arrive at the site in case of a lift failure. In response, Mrs Fanny LAW said that the Department had consulted the Federation of H.K., Kln. and N.T. Public Housing Estates Residents and Shopowners Organizations and the Hong Kong People Council on Public Housing Policy on the document. She assured Members that the document would be revised from time to time taking into account opinions from residents and interest groups. The first revision would be conducted one year after the issue of the document. She also agreed to revise some words of the leaflet, where appropriate, to avoid ambiguity. She informed Members that the objective of the document was to draw the attention of the residents and other clients to some common problems in housing estates, rather than drawing up a lance-sheet of the rights and responsibilities of the client groups. She further pointed out that a number of communication channels was shown in the leaflets. The residents might also contact the estate offices for assistance when necessary. The Chairman envisaged that there would be operational difficulties in putting down the names of the officers for handling complaints in the leaflets. Mr R A BATES said that the average time taken to arrive at the site in case of a lift failure might be less than one hour. But he pointed out that the Department would provide such a service on every day of a year under the pledge. He suggested that the issue should be re-examined by the Building Committee. The Chairman and Mrs Fanny LAW agreed with Dr CHEUNG that the performance pledges in the leaflets should be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they were not drawn up using generous yardsticks. 8. Mr YEUNG Ka-sing considered that the document should be concise and easy to understand. He suggested that it should first be read by PRH residents to test whether they understood it. He, however, pointed out that it was impossible to prepare a document with solutions to all kinds of problem. Mrs Fanny LAW informed Members that the Department had had three meetings with PRH residents and their comments on the draft document had been incorporated in the document.

9. Mr NG Shui-lai considered the document useful in enhancing communication between the residents and the Department. He agreed with Dr Anthony

CHEUNG that a balance of rights and responsibilities needed to be shown in the leaflets to avoid conveying a misconception to the residents that they were required to assume more responsibilities than the rights they enjoyed.

10. Mr LAU Kwok-yu welcomed the introduction of the document. He believed that the document could improve communication between the Department and PRH residents and achieve a better standard of services. Given that the document was only a summary of the rights and responsibilities of the Authority's client groups, he had reservations about saying in the introductory letter of the leaflets that it "set out clearly the rights and responsibilities of both the Department and its customers" In addition, he asked whether there was any difference between "rights" and "entitlement" from the legal point of view. He also suggested to replace the word "we" (我哋) by the Housing Department (房屋局) in the leaflets. Furthermore, he understood that the major concern of PRH applicants was when they would be allocated a flat. But this had not been addressed in the leaflet on the rights and responsibilities of PRH applicants. He also opined that the font size of the questionnaire in the leaflets was too small. Mrs Fanny LAW agreed that the font size of the questionnaire should be larger. She said that the Department shared the concern of the PRH applicants. However, since planning and development of public housing was not entirely under the Department control, the Department could only provide the applicants with information on the progress of their applications. She reiterated that the document was not a legal document and the contents of the leaflets would change with the change of housing policy. In response to Mr Lau question on the difference between "rights" and "entitlement" Mr Simon LEE explained that one might say that an entitlement was derived from certain right and such right could be contractual, under common law or inherent in someone because of his position. In any event, since the document was not a legal document, Mr LEE considered that it was not advisable to give a strict legal interpretation to the terms. To further differentiate an entitlement and a right, the Department would need to clearly point out the kind of right referred to in the document.

11. Mr Joseph CHOW was in support of the document. He agreed with Mr YEUNG Ka-sing that the document should be easy to read. However, he noticed that "days", "working days" and "weeks" had been used in the performance pledges in different leaflets. He suggested that the Department should use the same standard to maintain consistency. He was also of the view that the provision in the leaflet on the rights and responsibilities of PRH tenants which stipulated that any breach of the tenancy agreement would lead to termination of tenancy should not be a responsibility. Mrs Fanny LAW explained that different standards were used in the performance pledges when service time was mentioned because the Department had made reference to some of the pledges of the Central Government when the leaflets were prepared. The Chairman and Mrs Law agreed to further examine this issue.

12. Mr Walter CHAN supported the introduction of the document. He had the following comments -

(a) Leaflet on the rights and responsibilities of PRH tenants

(i) Complaints to the Complaints Committee and appeals to the Appeal Panel should be put under separate provisions because of the different mechanisms of handling complaints and appeals and the consequences to the complaints;

(ii) Because of the different nature of opinions expressed, the provision on "expressing views on public housing or related issues" and "expressing views through mutual aid committees (MACs) or Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) should be separated; and

(b) Questions nos. 5 and 6 of the questionnaire attached to the leaflet were unclear. He wondered whether it was useful to itemize the various services provided to enable the Department to obtain some useful information.

He also asked whether the Department would issue a leaflet to enable non-PRH residents to know their rights and responsibilities so as to help them understand more about the work of the Authority. Mrs Fanny LAW agreed to consider Mr Chan's suggestions.

13. The Chairman and Mr WAN Man-yea agreed with Mr LAU Kwok-yu that rights and responsibilities could not be fully set out in leaflets as they were defined in the tenancy agreement and the Housing Ordinance. Mrs Law suggested and Mr LAU Kwok-yu agreed that "rights and responsibilities" should be used in the introductory letter instead of "rights and responsibilities". Mr Wan recalled that it was stated in the first draft of the document presented by the Department to an earlier brainstorming session that the tenants have the right to have a safe and clean environment but this right had been omitted from the document. He suggested reinstating the right. Mrs Fanny LAW explained that both the Department and other Members had agreed to delete the statement from the leaflet during the brainstorming session because the word "safe" was subjective and abstract and might cause misunderstanding. She considered that it might be useful to mention in the leaflet on repairs to public housing that residents should inform the Department as soon as they observe any potential dangers on the estates.

14. Mr LAU Kwok-yu said that purely mentioning that PRH applicants have the right to know the progress of their applications would not satisfy the applicants. He wondered whether it was possible for the Department to specify the time of allocation of flats after the applicants had been interviewed. He was also of the view that the use of questionnaires to collect views was a passive measure. He suggested that the Department should be more active in the consultation process. He also considered that the views of staff unions should be taken into account and reflected to the Authority. Mrs Fanny LAW informed Members that six meetings had been held in July with PRH residents, PRH applicants, Home Ownership Schemes (HOS) residents, HOS applicants, tenants of commercial units, etc. Two more meetings with PRH residents had also been held subsequently. During discussions with the staff unions, the staff side had expressed concern about possible consequential increase in the number of complaints. She said that this point would be further discussed with the staff unions in future reviews of the document. She further said that the Department would continue to hold meetings with concerned parties if the number of questionnaires returned was below expectation. On the question of flat allocation, Mr C C HUI said that most of the applicants of PRH were interviewed once unless they had provided insufficient documentary evidence or there were discrepancies in the evidence provided. He further said that it was difficult to specify the time of flat allocation because this depended on the availability of flats in the district an applicant had chosen.

15. Mr CHENG Kai-nam considered that PRH residents should be informed through the document that while the Department would serve them as best as it could, there were matters which were not within the jurisdiction of the Department. He also opined that although the document was not a legal document, the Department should make reference to the legal provisions in drawing up the document to avoid possible disputes. He further said that the assistance of EMACs and MACs could be enlisted to collect views from the residents.

16. Secretary for Housing was in support of the document. He said that the rights and responsibilities of the Authority's major client groups had been clearly stated in the leaflets. It also demonstrated the Department's determination to provide high quality services and to adopt a more open approach towards the public. It was in line with the Government's policy.

17. As a PRH resident, Ms HO On-nei said that she understood the contents of the document. She suggested that working day instead of calendar day should be used in the performance pledges in the document. On the question of complaint channels, she said that most of the PRH residents were well aware of the complaint hotline 2712 2712.

18. Mr LEUNG Chun-ying said that the point that the document was not a legal document and it was not meant to replace the provisions of the Housing Ordinance, tenancy agreement and other policy documents had to be clearly made known to the residents. He agreed with Mr WAN Man-yeek that the document was only a summary of the rights and responsibilities of the Authority's major client groups. Its purpose was to communicate more clearly, and in a more focused manner, the rights and responsibilities of individual client groups as mentioned in the paper, and not to clarify the rights and responsibilities. Mr LEUNG was also of the view that PRH applicants were more concerned about their right for allocation of flats according to the existing housing policy and legislation. They were responsible for complying with the obligations under the related policy, tenancy agreement and legislation on becoming PRH tenants. He suggested that the Department should look into these points in drawing up the leaflet on the rights and responsibilities of PRH tenants.

19. With the above comments, Members approved the document.

(AGENDA Management Enhancement Programme Item 4) (Paper No. HA 62/96)

20. The Director of Housing presented the paper. In addition, he praised Mrs Fanny LAW for the vision and commitment to change which she had brought to bear on all she had done during her service in the Department in particular the Management Enhancement Programme (MEP).

21. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that he had shown his support for enhancing the management of the Department and improving the quality of services when the issue was discussed at a meeting of the former Establishment and Finance Committee. The MEP would give the Department a clear direction in implementing the policies of the Authority and achieving better use of resources. Whilst relevant Committees of the Authority should be consulted on specific reforms and recommendations of the MEP in their respective areas of

responsibility, the progress and outcome of the implementation of the programme should also be reported to the Committees for information. He also said that many of the initiatives could be quantified. When performance indices were clearly set and were gradually adjusted to reflect a higher standard of performance achieved, Members of the Authority and its Committees and the public could easily see the progress of the implementation of the initiatives and that improvements had been made. He added that the senior management of the Department had done a lot to improve the quality of services in recent years. If the Department was to become customer- oriented, support from staff for the reform was essential. There had to be concerted efforts to take the reform forward. Moreover, customers should also be consulted on areas which affected them, in particular, on the quality of services.

22. Mr FUNG Kin-kee commented that it was the first time he had heard of the Department planning a programme of this scale and delivering it openly. It was good and necessary to have an MEP. However, he was of the view that the vision of the Department, namely "To be the community's pride as a professional team striving for continuous improvement in the provision of public housing and related services might have been drawn up only out of a sense of vanity. A more pragmatic vision should be proposed. Moreover, the vision should be shared by every staff of the Department. With staff participation and team spirit, the mission of the Department could be achieved irrespective of whether there was inspiring, dynamic and forward-looking leadership."

23. Dr CHEUNG Bing-leung agreed to the core values - the Cs. He said that the Department had taken the initiative to strive for continuous improvement and this spirit was commendable. He considered that the most important part of the MEP was culture change. To bring about such a change, it would also depend on staff's participation and determination in addition to the senior management's commitment. It was therefore essential to make staff understand the aims of the reform. Besides, support from customers was also needed. For example, apart from the EMAC scheme, the Department should consider other ways to enable the customers to express their views.

24. Mr Daniel LAM said that he was delighted to see that there would be a radical change in the Department. He cautioned that there might be resistance to such a change. The senior management should implement the change programme quickly and resolutely if the Department wished to have a successful reform.

25. Ms SIU Yuen-sheung also supported the spirit of the MEP. She said that it would be welcomed by the public especially PRH tenants. However, given the large number of estates, to effect a change would not be an easy task. There had to be concerted efforts by the senior management and staff, in particular frontline staff, who needed to contact the tenants frequently and had been facing the greatest pressure. To enhance a sense of belonging, staff's efforts should be recognized. The Department should communicate more with staff and give them advice, guidance and training. In addition, she suggested that there should be more communication with tenants through EMACs, MACs, etc so that problems could be solved at an early stage.

26. Mr YEUNG Ka-sing remarked that it was essential to continuously improve the quality of services and efficiency. To facilitate the Department to carry out



the reform, the Civil Service Branch should allow the Department to adopt a flexible approach to suit special circumstances.

27. Mr WONG Luen-kin agreed that support from frontline staff and the public, especially PRH tenants, was very important. Moreover, staff should understand the MEP clearly before the management could obtain their support. Besides, their views on the MEP should be given due consideration. To gain support from the public and the tenants, the Department had to let them know its commitment to the reform and to improving the quality of services. Their views including complaints had to be considered seriously and responded to actively. Mr Wong also said that the reform should include a review of performance management measures to ensure that staff were rewarded on merits.

28. Mr LAU Kwok-yu indicated his full support for the reform. He said that co-operation of the management and frontline staff was important. He suggested that the vision, mission and core values statements as set out in Annex E of the paper should be made known to the public and displayed at estate offices and included in HA publications. Referring to paragraph 7 of the paper, he agreed that Chairmen of the Authority and its Committees should provide the steer on strategic and policy matters. He enquired whether a new Standing Committee would be set up for such purpose. The Chairman replied that as she would meet with the Committee Chairmen regularly to exchange views, there was no need to set up a new Standing Committee.

29. Mr WAN Man-yea agreed to the proposed vision of the Department. He was of the view that the vision should be based on a sense of pride. Also, both the Authority and the Department should share the same vision which had to be supported by tenants and the Central Government. For the MEP to be successful, it was necessary to identify officers at different levels with outstanding performance to help implement the plan. Moreover, constraints arising from existing civil service practices should be overcome. Staff with outstanding performance should be rewarded and given better promotion prospects.

30. In response to Members' comments, the Director of Housing said that to encourage a sense of pride was to try to get a better feel for what the Department was going to do. On one hand, the Authority and the Department were regarded as very successful internationally. But on the other hand, they were a big target for criticisms locally. Staff wished to be respected and hoped that the Authority and the Department were successful locally as well. He had contacted frontline staff during visits to outstations and meeting with representatives of staff unions. They had reflected to him their problems in their work. With the change in political climate, there were also rising expectations of the tenants. In addition, a lot of subsidiary policies and objective of the Department had been generated over time. Little praise was given to staff when they got things done. When cascading the MEP objectives, core values, etc., to frontline staff, the Department also had to listen to their responses to the challenge and their needs in terms of support from the management. A lot of things had to be done by the Department in the reform and regular reports would be submitted to Members. For certain areas such as financial objectives, business plans, etc., guidance from the Authority and its Committees would be sought. Furthermore, part of the process of working out the business plans was to give each area of work clear targets to work with. Although quantifiable objectives could be developed in many areas of work, some were not possible to be quantified.

31. Mrs Fanny LAW remarked that when determining the vision, it should be borne in mind that the Authority and the Department did not only serve PRH tenants but also the whole community. It was necessary to strike a balance between the interest of the people of Hong Kong and the interest of PRH tenants. The Department had to be more open and explain its work to the public to make them understand and recognize the Department's achievements. She also said that the leadership required in the MEP was not only from one or two persons, but also from all the managers of different ranks and grades. When the leaders were inspiring, dynamic and forward-looking, they could motivate their staff to face the challenge ahead.

32. The Chairman said that the MEP would provide a comprehensive framework for different areas of improvement such as those on financial aspects, quality of services and relationship with tenants which would result in a more responsive and efficient department. A lot of work would have to be done in the following two years. Both the Authority and the Department would be involved in enhancing the management and quality of services. Members' support, co-operation and encouragement were also needed. In addition, the most important aspect of implementing the MEP was the determination of the senior management and all staff. There should also be mutual understanding, trust and concerted efforts. She also emphasized that the Department had to be given time to carry out the reform and results would not be seen within a short period of time.

33. With the above comments, Members noted the paper.

(The meeting was interrupted by a disorderly petition by a group of people who observed the meeting at the public gallery. The meeting was conducted in the Committee Room at 10:53 a.m., as decided by the Chairman.)

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

##### Keeping of dogs in public housing estates

34. Mr WAN Man-ye said that all along the Department had not enforced the policy of not allowing tenants to keep dogs. The number of dogs kept in PRH had thus increased. As a result of the Department's recent strict enforcement some 2 000 dogs had been sent to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals by the tenants. Most of them had not been adopted and subsequently destroyed. The dogs were innocent but they had to suffer ultimately. It was not humane. If the Department continued to take action against those tenants keeping dogs, the problem would be very serious. Because of the congested living environment in housing estates, conflicts between tenants were not uncommon. Tenants who complained against the keeping of dogs might be those who took revenge against others. Furthermore, the dogs might not have caused any nuisance. In many cases, a dog had become part of a family and it could bring company and joy to its owner. Although he agreed that PRH tenants should not keep dogs, he suggested that tenants who were keeping dogs be allowed to continue to do so until their dogs died. Only new dogs would not be permitted. He offered to help the Department to jointly solve the problem if necessary.

35. Mr J J NG pointed out that it was specified in the tenancy agreement that no animals could be kept in PRH units. The provision had also been explained to the

tenants clearly. Moreover, the existing design of PRH units was not suitable for keeping dogs. He said that a working group had been set up in 1992 to enforce the policy, but at that time, a low key approach was adopted and tenants were only advised not to keep dogs. Subsequent to an incident in April 1996 in which a baby was bitten to death by a dog, the policy was enforced more strictly. If the tenants did not give up their dogs within 14 days, their tenancy would be terminated. Such strict enforcement had been well received by tenants who did not keep dogs. He told Members that out of the 3 794 warning notices issued, dogs had been abandoned in 3 647 cases. The Department had issued 25 notices to quit to those tenants who had not responded to the warning notices and the majority of these tenants had subsequently given up their dogs.

36. Mr FUNG Ho-tong added that the 3 794 dog-keeping cases only represented 0.5% of the existing stock of PRH units. The Department had to be responsible to the 99.5% of tenants who complied with the tenancy agreement and did not keep dogs. Moreover, the climax of the enforcement campaign was over as the majority of the dogs in PRH units had been removed by the defaulting tenants. The Department's efforts would be focused on relapse cases and preventing tenants from keeping dogs again.

37. Mr FUNG Kin-kee said that he had been pressing the Department to take stricter enforcement in this aspect. Not until 1992 that a working group had been formed to deal with the problem. Given the congested living environment and the absence of facilities for dogs, keeping of dogs in PRH was not suitable. He had received many complaints against cleanliness problems and noise nuisance generated by dogs. If the dogs were allowed to stay, it would be unfair to other tenants. He would only support keeping of dogs in Harmony Blocks when facilities for dogs were provided.

38. Ms HO On-nei opined that with the large number of PRH units, estate management staff could not ensure that tenants had made safety precautions when they brought their dogs out to the public areas. When the dogs caused injuries to other people, the Department would face great political pressure.

39. Mr YEUNG Ka-sing pointed out that if the Department did not enforce the policy strictly, it would set a very bad precedent.

#### Petition against rent increase in Harmony Blocks

40. The Chairman informed Members that the following letters addressed to her and Members of the Authority expressing their objection to the increase of the rent of Harmony Blocks had been tabled for Members' information - (a) a letter dated 26 September 1996 from the Federation of H.K, Kln. and N.T. Public Housing Estates Residents and Shopowners Organizations (Annex A); and

(b) a letter dated 23 September 1996 from the Ma Hang Estate Mutual Aid Committees and resident representatives (Annex B).

41. Referring to the petition letters, Mr CHENG Kai-nam said that he had suggested at a recent meeting of the Management and Operations Committee that the rent increase should be implemented in two phases to reduce the political pressure on the Authority. He added that for those affected housing estates, flexible arrangements should be made in carrying out improvement and

maintenance works and provision of additional facilities with a view to alleviating tenants' dissatisfaction.

42. The Chairman said that as the issues of keeping of dogs and rent increase were under the purview of the Management and Operations Committee, they would not be further discussed unless the majority of the Members objected to the decisions made on the issues. She added that in future, the Department should make more efforts to explain to the tenants the reasons for making certain policies or decisions.

#### Housing Conference in May 1996

43. A video on the Housing Conference held in May 1996 was shown.

44. The Chairman informed Members that the proceedings of the Conference had been compiled and tabled for Members' information. She took the opportunity to thank Mrs Katherine YAU and her team for their good efforts in making the Housing Conference a success.

#### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

45. The next meeting would be held at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday, 2 January 1997.

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46. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:32 a.m.  
CONFIRMED on

Hon Rosanna WONG Yick-ming, CBE, JP  
(Chairman)

Lawrence CHOW  
(Meeting Secretary)