

Housing Department's response to Ombudsman's direct investigation report

Regarding a report released by the Office of the Ombudsman today (March 13) on its direct investigation into "Estate Management of Public Rental Housing (PRH) by the Housing Department: Illegal Parking", the Housing Department (HD) thanked the Ombudsman for understanding that the daily management of public housing estates involves an extensive range of tasks and that the estate offices (EOs) assume significant responsibilities and heavy workloads; recognising that some estate roads are unable to install a vehicle access control system due to site constraints, prompting illegal parking which requires EOs to make more efforts to combat illegal parking. At the same time, EOs will also consider the needs of residents, particularly the elderly, young children and wheelchair users, as well as the visitation needs of their family and friends. In light of this, the HD will handle short-term parking in a reasonable and compassionate manner, in the spirit of being people-oriented.

The Housing Authority (HA)/HD have shown great concern for road management in PRH estates, continuously strengthening management practices and introducing various facilities equipped with innovative technologies, including IoT (Internet of Things) sensors, artificial intelligence, etc to enhance enforcement effectiveness in combating illegal parking. In addition, the HA/HD promote law-abiding awareness among residents through publicity and education with the aim of maintaining estate roads, especially to keep emergency vehicular access (EVA) unobstructed, and timely reviews relevant measures to ensure overall effectiveness.

HD staff will continue to conduct daily monitoring, surprise inspections and regular meetings with service contractors to ensure that they have effectively executed their contractual obligations such as road control. To strengthen road control, the Mobile Operations Unit under the HD will base on the actual circumstances and requests from EOs to carry out surprise enforcement actions on roads with higher instances of illegal parking, especially the EVA.

"Regarding the direct investigation report initiated by the Ombudsman, we are thankful for its valuable views on our current road control mechanisms. We agree with and accept all the suggestions made by the Ombudsman. In fact, most of the suggestions are already implemented in PRH estates. We will continue to enhance the existing measures against illegal parking, make timely manpower deployments and increase resources, actively explore the use of innovative technologies to enhance management effectiveness, and collaborate with other government departments to conduct joint operations against illegal parking, ensuring that estate roads, especially the EVA remain unobstructed," the spokesman said.