SUMMARY

The Town Councils appear to have performed poorly in the routine maintenance of the housing estates under their charge as evidenced by the public outcry in the press. In response to this, this study seeks to improve the situation faced by the Town Councils; by identifying and critically evaluating the four main areas of contract management in conservancy and cleaning works, namely, method of tender procurement; specification and maintenance standards; selection of contractors; and supervision and control of the workmen.

It is recommended that the bureaucratic nature of the Town Council Financial Rules be modified to allow for a selective open tendering system. The specification and maintenance standards must be updated, clear and measurable. A selection criteria model was proposed to objectively select the most appropriate contractor for the job. The effectiveness of site supervision and control of conservancy workers depends very much on the experience and personality of the site supervisors. A checklist is proposed to achieve some objective standards in site supervision.
Further recommendations are made in the area of productivity; maintenance audit; direct labour; subcontracting; residents' education; and standard contract forms. The findings of a survey of 30 conservancy contractors reveal the relatively weak financial capability of the contractors; the lack of qualified personnel resources and appropriate cleaning equipment. This was also reflected in the performance of the contractors as assessed by the various Town Councils.

Underlying the discussion, the researcher highlights the conflicting issues and constraints within the concept of Town Council and the actual operation of the Town Council.

The researcher is of the view that the Town Council is a political-social vehicle with unclear powers and functions, at times overlapping with that of HDB. In the context of the existing concept of Town Council, it may be wiser that the professional and technical perspective of routine maintenance of the housing estates be tampered towards that of a social concern and caring of the physical environment.

**Keywords:** contract management routine maintenance
              Town Council specification
              selection criteria profile of contractors
              caring of the physical environment