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AUTHORITIES must step in and manage struggling low-cost strata schemes because local management bodies lack the funds and expertise to do so, says community activist Andre Lai.

"The Strata Management Act 2013 (SMA) allows the Commissioner of Buildings (COB) to take over the management of a strata scheme if it is proven that the original management has failed to perform its duties adequately.

"If repeated complaints by residents and attempts to bring the management to the Strata Management Tribunal have failed, the COB has the power to appoint licensed property managers to manage the building," he said.

He added that the SMA set an optimal environment for proper strata management, making execution and ground-level enforcement the key priorities.

Calls for COB to step in when low-cost flat management fails



Chong says low-cost flats are usually unpopular with property managers.

However, Strata Owners Association Malaysia honorary secretary Kelvin Chong said it



Lai says COB can appoint licensed property managers to manage low-cost strata schemes.

was impractical to appoint property managers to problematic, low-cost strata schemes.

"The management bodies are obliged to pay property managers for managing their buildings.

"However, if the management is already facing financial constraints, how are they supposed to pay the managers?

"Low-cost flats are usually unpopular with property managers due to the various problems associated with their management.

"It is also not feasible to ask local authorities to pay property managers, as this creates a loophole for management bodies to further evade their responsibilities," said Chong, who is also a property manager.

He suggested enacting a law to allow low-cost strata owners to pay their maintenance fees directly to local authorities.

"If we continue relying on problematic management bodies, this issue will never be resolved," he said.

He also called for the SMA to be strengthened to move away from blanket coverage for different types of buildings.

"Low-cost housing, commercial properties, hotels, and mixed-development schemes all require different management styles," he said.

In a statement to *StarMetro*, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) explained that appointing property managers to take over problematic strata schemes was not an automatic process.

"Several steps need to be taken by the COB before making a decision. These include issuing reminder letters, holding discussion and engagement sessions, and assessing the status of the existing management bodies," it said.

It added that the COB, within its jurisdiction, had appointed property managers in 33 strata schemes so far.