

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)226/02-03
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs and
and LegCo Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of joint meeting held on
Friday, 19 July 2002, at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Members of the LegCo Panel on Transport

- * Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
- Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
- * Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
- * Hon LAU Kong-wah
- * Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
- Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- * Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

Hon CHOY So-yuk (Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

(* Also members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs)

Members absent : Members of the LegCo Panel on Transport

- * Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
- Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
- Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP

Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung

**Public officers
attending**

: Agenda item II

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mr Howard CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works (Environment)

Environmental Protection Department

Mr K S CHAN
Acting Assistant Director of Environmental Protection

Transport Department

Mr S M LI
Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Urban)

Highways Department

Mr Felix LEUNG
Senior Engineer (Capital Works)

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Individuals

Mr MAN Tak-chuen
Kowloon City District Council member

Mr LAU Ting-bong
Kowloon City District Council member

Sha Tin District Council (STDC)

Mr YEUNG Cheung-li
Chairman of Transport & Traffic Committee, STDC

Hong Kong Institute of Acoustics

Mr Richard KWAN
Immediate Past Chairman

Joint Conference of Transport Trades Against Road Closure Schemes (Joint Conference)

Mr Ricky WONG
Convenor of Joint Conference and representative of
Hong Kong Container Tractor Owner Association

Mr AU-YEUNG Kun
Representative of United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers
Association

Mr LAM Kwai-keung
Representative of the Association of NT Radio Taxicabs

Mr HO Hung-fai
Representative of Hong Kong Dumper Truck Drivers
Association

Mr IP Moon-lam
Representative of the Hong Kong Union of Light Van
Employees

Mr LAI Kin-tak
中重型貨車關注組代表

Mr Simon LAU
Representative of Hong Kong Container Drayage Services
Association

Mr WONG Siu-wah
Representative of Lok Ma Chau China-Hong Kong Freight
Association

Mr Richard TSANG
Representative of Hong Kong Association of Aircargo
Truckers

Mr LEUNG Kun-kuen
Representative of Kowloon Truck Merchants Association
and Institute of Advanced Motorists Hong Kong

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

Action

I Election of Chairman

Ms Miriam LAU was elected as Chairman of the joint meeting.

II Proposed traffic management schemes to address traffic noise problems

Meeting with individuals/deputations

2. The Chairman welcomed attending individuals and deputations to the meeting. She also drew members' attention to the submissions from Mr CHAU Yin-ming, Sai Kung District Council member (LC Paper No. CB(1)2290/01-02(02)), and the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (LC Paper No. CB(1)2304/01-02(01)), who were unavailable to attend the meeting.

3. Responding to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry, the Chairman confirmed that invitation letters had been sent to all District Councils (DCs).

Mr MAN Tak-chuen, Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) member

Mr LAU Ting-bong, KCDC member

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2290/01-02(01) - Joint submission dated 8 July 2002 from four Kowloon City District Council members, viz. Mr MAN Tak-chuen, Mr LAU Ting-bong, Mr CHAN Ka-wai and Miss FUNG King-man)

4. Both Mr MAN Tak-chuen and Mr LAU Ting-bong advised that they were attending the meeting to express their personal views on the matter. Mr MAN also informed members that the Transport & Traffic Committee of KCDC had passed a motion in February 2002 supporting the trial closure of East Kowloon Corridor (EKC).

5. Mr MAN Tak-chuen highlighted the main points set out in the joint submission he prepared with Mr LAU Ting-bong and other two KCDC members (LC Paper No. CB(1)2290/01-02(01)). He pointed out that as the Airport had moved to Chek Lap Kok, the number of vehicles which would be affected by the trial closure of EKC at night time from 1:00 am to 5:30 am would be minimal. As indicated by the Administration, alternative routes were available and they would have sufficient capacity to cope with the detoured traffic from EKC. Notwithstanding the possibility of an increase in noise level experienced by residents living along the alternative routes, he said that the flyover above would act as a screen to the traffic noise generated at ground level. Moreover, the closure of EKC during night-time could facilitate its maintenance. Hence, it could also help reduce the level of traffic noise during day-time.

6. Mr LAU Ting-bong also said that by comparison, the diverted traffic would cause less noise and environmental disturbance along the alternative routes because the ground floor units were mainly for commercial use. He added that in fact, various suggestions such as the retrofitting of noise barriers along EKC, had been put forward to the Administration for consideration. But they were considered technically not feasible. Hence, in the absence of other practical measures, a trial closure scheme should be implemented.

7. On the economic impact of the traffic management schemes, Mr MAN said that by reducing the noise nuisance experienced by the affected residents during night-time, a great deal of environmental and health benefits would be achieved, particularly in respect of reduced medical expenses and increased productivity. Reiterating the long-suffering problem of disturbed sleep of the local residents caused by passing vehicles, he called on members' support for conducting a trial closure at EKC during night-time.

8. On the installation of air-conditioning and double-glazed windows for the affected dwellings, Mr MAN said that they were not against the proposal. But given the financial implication, he considered that a trial closure scheme should be implemented at EKC so that early relief could be provided to the affected residents.

Sha Tin District Council (STDC)

9. Mr YEUNG Cheung-li, the Chairman of Transport & Traffic Committee, STDC, said that he had no specific views to raise.

Hong Kong Institute of Acoustics (HKIOA)

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2304/01-02(01) - Submission dated 16 July 2002 from HKIOA)

10. Mr Richard KWAN, Immediate Past Chairman of HKIOA, stated that studies conducted by the Government had confirmed that many residents living along major trunk roads were exposed to substantial traffic noise. In this respect, HKIOA welcomed and supported the Administration's present proposal of implementing traffic management measures to provide a better noise environment for the community. If appropriately implemented, traffic management schemes would provide the affected

residents with much relief from traffic noise disturbance. He further said that if Hong Kong aspired to be a world-class city, a quality noise environment should be created to match that aspiration. The Government was taking a right step towards that direction.

Joint Conference of Transport Trades Against Road Closure Schemes

11. The Chairman invited members to note the submissions from United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association, Lok Ma Chau-Hong Kong Freight Association, Hong Kong Container Tractor Owner Association Limited, Institute of Advanced Motorists Hong Kong and Kowloon Truck Merchants Association Ltd., which were tabled at the meeting (subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(1)2335/01-02(01) to (05) respectively). She then invited those transport trade organizations to briefly introduced their submissions.

12. Mr AU-YEUNG Kun of United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association, reiterated the grave concern of the urban taxis trade on the proposed trial closure schemes. He was strongly of the view that the traffic management schemes proposed by the Administration were not justified from both the environmental and economic points of view. Traffic noise would only be diverted to other areas along the alternative routes and much economic loss would have to be borne by the transport trades and the travelling public. As such, he called on members to turn down the proposed trial closure schemes, having regard to the adverse implications of the schemes on the taxi trades.

13. Mr Ricky WONG, Convenor of the Joint Conference and representative of Hong Kong Container Tractor Owner Association, reiterated the general view of the transport trades that the use of traffic management measures could not bring about a real solution to the problem because the traffic noise at the flyovers was simply diverted to other areas along the alternative routes.

14. Mr LEUNG Kun-kuen said that he was attending the meeting on behalf of Kowloon Truck Merchants Association and Institute of Advanced Motorists Hong Kong. He remarked that when vehicles travelled on flyovers/expressways, they could travel at a higher speed without the need to stop before traffic lights. In addition, vehicles were diverted off at-grade roads and separated from the pedestrians. As such, he hoped that members and the Administration could take into account the adverse impact the present proposal would have on road safety.

Meeting with the Administration

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2290/01-02(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)1807/01-02(01) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

15. The Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment) (PAS for ETW) referred members to the paper prepared by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)2290/01-02(03)) in response to members' request raised at the joint meeting held on 18 June 2002. He apologized to members that the Chinese headings of items B and C of Appendix B to the paper had been misplaced, i.e. item B should read “完全封閉葵芳邨對開的葵涌道天橋” while item C “完全封閉荃灣德士古道天橋”.

16. PAS for ETW said that a summary of the predicted noise levels and the number of dwellings affected along the alternative routes was set out in Appendix B. In general, there would be reduction in traffic noise to the dwellings along the concerned flyovers/road section. With the implementation of the proposed schemes, residents along the concerned flyovers/road section would benefit from noise reduction of up to 9 dB(A). But there were residents along the diverted routes that would experience an increase in noise levels.

Full closure of EKC

17. As far as EKC was concerned, PAS for ETW advised that there could be a noise reduction of 2 to 9 dB(A) at some 2 600 dwellings above the flyover along Kowloon City Road and Chatham Road. However, about 8 600 dwellings along the diverted routes such as Ma Tau Wai Road, To Kwa Wan Road and Ha Heung Road etc. could experience an increase of noise level of 1 to 7 dB(A). In view of the substantial noise impact on the dwellings along the diverted routes, the Administration considered that this proposed scheme should be deferred until the relevant departments were able to devise a scheme that could satisfactorily alleviate the noise impact on those dwellings.

18. Mr MAN Tak-chuen expressed disappointment with the Administration's decision. He emphasized that given the lack of other engineering alternatives, the implementation of a traffic management scheme at EKC was really the last hope for the affected residents. As such, he urged the Administration to re-consider its decision of delaying the trial scheme at EKC. He also called on members to consider not only the economic impact of the proposed schemes, but also the environmental and health benefits that would be achieved, particularly in respect of reduced medical expenses and increased productivity. To supplement, Mr LAU Ting-bong said that if the diverted traffic could make use of the Airport Tunnel, the number of affected dwellings along the alternative routes might be reduced.

19. While acknowledging the difficulties involved, Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that the Administration should not simply shelf the proposed scheme and do

nothing further to help those affected residents who were constantly exposed to excessive traffic noise up to 75 dB(A).

20. In reply, PAS for ETW clarified that the Administration was not scrapping the proposed scheme. However, in view of the substantial noise impact on the dwellings along the diverted routes, the Administration would need to devise a scheme that could satisfactorily resolve this issue before conducting a trial scheme. In this connection, the Administration would brief the relevant DC on the latest findings of the noise impact assessment and solicit local views accordingly.

Full closure of Kwai Chung Road Flyover and Texaco Road Flyover

21. Regarding Kwai Chung Road Flyover and Texaco Flyover, PAS for ETW advised that they were built along the middle of the road reserve with at-grade roads on either side. There were screening structures like podium, commercial centre and slope etc. between the residential buildings and the ground level carriageways. The flyovers themselves also provided screening effect. Hence, when the traffic was diverted from the flyovers to the ground level, noise level at dwellings above the flyovers would decrease. Since the traffic was not diverted to other roads, no other dwellings would be affected. For both schemes, there would be approximately 2 600 dwellings benefitting from up to 3 dB(A) of noise reduction while some 40 dwellings below the flyover decks might be subject to an increase of about 2 to 3 dB(A) due to the diverted traffic.

22. PAS for ETW added that at the district level, the Administration had consulted the Tsuen Wan District Council and the Kwai Tsing District Council. Both DCs did not object to the two proposed schemes. However, the former had requested a review of the effectiveness of the Texaco Road Flyover scheme in three months' time after its implementation while the latter had requested the Administration to consult the transport trades.

23. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for implementing a trial scheme at the said locations. However, citing the heavy traffic at these two flyovers during night-time, he was concerned about the likely congestion caused by the detoured traffic at signalized junctions along the alternative routes. He therefore considered that instead of full closure, only heavy vehicles should be restricted. In this respect, Mr AU-YEUNG Kun also queried the Administration's assessment that there would be no capacity problems at the junctions of Texaco Road/Tai Wo Hau Road and Texaco Road/Shu Tsui Road.

24. Addressing the concern raised by members and the transport trades about the traffic impact of the trial closure of Kwai Chung Road Flyover and Texaco Road Flyover, PAS for ETW referred to the detailed traffic assessment set out in Appendix A to the paper. He said that if the flyovers were closed, the travelling time via ground level roads would only slightly increase by about 20 to 70 seconds. Moreover, there was ample reserve capacity at the signalized junctions along the alternative routes during the proposed closure period. The traffic assessment concluded that no capacity problem would occur during the closure period. The Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Urban) supplemented that the Transport Department would make appropriate

adjustments to the signal timings of the major traffic lights to enable vehicles to drive through without having to stop before every junction.

25. PAS for ETW further said that as heavy vehicles only accounted for a very small percentage in the traffic flow during the closure period, the maximum noise benefit would be greatly reduced if only heavy vehicles were restricted. Moreover, there would also be other problems in respect of enforcement. Hence, the Administration proposed that full closure should apply to these two flyovers.

26. Given that the prevailing noise level was only about 60 dB(A), the Chairman sought explanation on the justification for implementing the proposed scheme at Kwai Chung Road Flyover. In reply, PAS for ETW explained that notwithstanding the relatively low noise level at Kwai Chung Road Flyover at night, the highest noise level during day-time there could exceed 80 dB(A). As engineering solutions were found to be impracticable, the Administration considered that the implementation of traffic management measures should be explored with a view to providing the affected residents with some relief from the excessive traffic noise they had to endure all day long. Although the noise benefit was only 1 to 2 dB(A), the nuisance created by sporadic noises caused by passing vehicles could be effectively eliminated. He also highlighted that the number of vehicles affected during the proposed restriction period would be very small.

27. Mr LAU Kong-wah noted that some 40 dwellings would suffer from an increase in noise level after the proposed traffic management schemes were implemented at these two flyovers. Given that they were adversely affected by the traffic management schemes, he asked whether the Administration would provide the affected residents with any compensation.

28. In reply, PAS for ETW stressed that there was no single formula to evaluate a proposed scheme. The Administration would need to balance all of the relevant factors including the benefits and dis-benefits of a proposed scheme before taking a view on a scheme. He noted that in this particular case, approximately 2 600 dwellings would benefit from a noise reduction up to 3 dB(A) while some 40 dwellings below the flyover decks might be subject to an increase of about 2 to 3 dB(A) due to the diverted traffic. Moreover, he pointed out that the prevailing noise levels of these dwellings were already between 58 to 66 dB(A). Nevertheless, the Administration believed that a trial should be conducted to assess the actual impact. Subject to the results of the trial and the views of the concerned parties, the Administration would decide whether permanent schemes should be implemented. However, the Administration did not have any policy of compensating the affected residents under the circumstances.

29. Mr LAU Kong-wah was unconvinced by the Administration's reply. He considered it highly unfair that the Administration could refuse to face up to its responsibility and safeguard the interest of those who were adversely affected by the traffic management schemes.

30. Mr Ricky WONG expressed disappointment with the Administration's decision to proceed with the trial at Kwai Chung Road Flyover and Texaco Road Flyover despite the strong protest from the transport trades. Highlighting the impact road closure would have on the operation of cross-boundary freight transport, he considered that the Administration should also solicit the views of Mainland trade and transport associations. There might be additional road safety risks for the local residents if Mainland drivers were not familiar with the associated route changes. Expressing similar views, Mr LAI Kin-tak of 中重型貨車關注組 and Mr Richard TSANG of Hong Kong Association of Aircargo Truckers stated their strong opposition to the suggestion that only heavy vehicles should be restricted. Mr LEUNG Kan-keung also considered it highly unfair to single out heavy vehicles as the target, particularly in the absence of any conclusive evidence showing that heavy vehicles were the main cause of such noise. In fact, noise nuisance was mostly created by vehicles and motorcycles which had been modified or were driving at high speed at night.

Banning of goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes along Ngan Shing Street

31. On the situation at Ngan Shing Street, PAS for ETW said that Ngan Shing Street was the main road serving CityOne Shatin with a number of bus routes passing through. There was a bus terminus in the vicinity and bus operation dominated the noise levels there at night time. The environment would become quieter after the operation hours of the bus service. The proposed scheme of banning heavy vehicles from the street would alleviate noise problems at the dwellings during the restricted hours. He also informed members that STDC was consulted and had expressed support for the proposed scheme.

32. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that as the traffic noise was not diverted to another location, he would support the implementation of the proposed trial scheme at Ngan Shing Street. Miss CHOY So-yuk suggested that in order to facilitate the operation of local businesses, the restriction hours could be adjusted accordingly to allow for loading/unloading activities.

33. In response, PAS for ETW said that special permits might be granted if considered necessary. Mr LAI Kin-tak however remarked that if only some goods vehicles were granted with the special permits, it would create unfair competition among the transport operators.

Potential benefits and impact of traffic management schemes

34. Mr Tommy CHEUNG was dissatisfied that the Administration did not have a clear overall policy on the implementation of traffic management schemes to alleviate excessive traffic noise. As the anticipated noise reduction level was only 1 to 2 dB(A) in some case, he queried whether the Administration had any threshold in mind, say 60 dB(A), when identifying possible locations for trial closure schemes. He also did not believe that the trial schemes should proceed before their economic impacts were properly assessed. Moreover, he was concerned that the Administration did not seem to have a clear set of assessment criteria in respect of increase/reduction in noise levels

when determining whether the closure schemes should be implemented on a long-term basis.

35. In response, PAS for ETW said that the Administration had qualitatively looked into the sustainability and economic impact of the proposed schemes. More time and data would be required if detailed assessments were to be conducted. However, the economic impact of the proposed schemes at Kwai Chung Road Flyover, Texaco Flyover and Ngan Shing Street would be insignificant because the additional travelling distance and time involved would be very little. The Administration considered it worthwhile to pursue these proposed trials due to the overall noise benefit the management schemes were expected to bring about and the insignificant transport and economic impacts.

36. PAS for ETW further stated that when considering whether long-term traffic management schemes would be implemented, it would not be appropriate for the Administration to base its decisions simply on the absolute value of noise level increase/reduction along the concerned flyovers/alternative routes. Instead, the Administration would take into account various factors including the change in noise level at the road sections concerned, number of dwellings benefited/affected, traffic impact, public views including those from members, local residents, the transport trades and DCs.

37. The Chairman asked whether the difference in noise reduction of 1 dB(A) could be perceived by human beings. In reply, Mr Richard KWAN advised that according to relevant studies, 1 dB was the just noticeable difference in sound intensity for the normal human ear. He further explained that the sound readings in Appendix B were presented by “L₁₀”, a unit used to describe a given noise environment in percentile level. “L₁₀ (1 hour)” was the noise level exceeded for 10% of the one-hour period. While this level might be considered as the average maximum sound level during the specified period, the actual change in noise levels associated with individual noise events which happened during that period might not be truly reflected by the “L₁₀” readings.

38. Mr Albert CHAN opined that while the level of noise reduction might not be substantial, the night-time closure of flyovers/road section could help address the problem of sporadic noises caused by passing vehicles, particularly heavy vehicles. The affected residents would hence not be disturbed from their sleep. PAS for ETW said that a single noise event caused by a passing taxi/private car was about 77 dB(A) while that of a heavy vehicle was about 81 dB(A). Hence, while the improvements in terms of noise reduction might only be 2 to 3 dB(A) in some cases, the nuisance created by sporadic loud noises caused by passing vehicles could be effectively eliminated by the night-time closure of the concerned flyovers/road section.

39. Noting Mr KWAN's view, Ms Cyd HO opined that instead of considering the average noise level of the concerned flyovers/road section, the focus should be those noise events which were disturbing the affected residents during night-time, including the frequency, maximum sound level and cause of such events, as well as the type(s) of vehicles which were involved. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to determine which type(s) of vehicles should be restricted and what was the actual noise benefit to be

Admin achieved. As such, Ms HO requested the Administration to provide relevant information to members for consideration after the meeting. To clearly illustrate the impact of sporadic loud noises created by passing vehicles, Mr Albert CHAN also requested the Administration to provide a breakdown on the prevailing noise levels of the concerned flyovers/road sections, including the number of noise incidents with a noise level of 75 dB(A) and above during the proposed restriction hours.

Admin 40. In reply, the Acting Assistant Director of Environmental Protection explained that heavy vehicles only accounted for a small percentage of vehicles using the concerned flyovers where full closure was proposed. Hence, if only heavy vehicles were restricted, the noise level difference to the residents would be much less than full closure. He undertook to provide the information requested by members after the meeting.

41. Ms Cyd HO was also concerned about the corresponding increases in noise level along alternative routes, particularly the noise nuisance created as a result of the “stop and go” movements of vehicles, especially heavy vehicles, at signalized road junctions. To minimize the noise nuisance so created, she opined that where possible, alternative routes further away from residential dwellings should be identified. The Administration should also consider making appropriate adjustments to the signal timings during night-time.

Alternative options for the Administration to consider

Provision of air-conditioning and double-glazed windows

42. As noise impact assessments conducted by the Administration failed to provide conclusive evidence to support the implementation of traffic management schemes, Miss CHOY So-yuk reiterated that the Administration should consider providing the affected dwellings with air-conditioning and double-glazed windows. She considered that this might be a better way to ensure that the interests of all parties concerned were taken care of. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also remarked that the Administration had a duty to consider all possible alternatives including the provision of air-conditioning and double-glazed windows that could help relieve the noise nuisance suffered by the affected residents.

43. Ms Emily LAU was strongly of the view that the Administration should not rule out any option that could alleviate the nuisance of excessive traffic noise suffered by the affected residents. She maintained that traffic management schemes should be implemented where practical. However, for those locations where closure schemes could not be implemented, the affected dwellings should be provided with indirect technical remedies.

44. Mr David CHU considered that road closure was not a real solution to the problem. Instead, the Administration should seriously consider providing air-conditioning and double-glazed windows to the affected dwellings. To reduce the financial burden on the public purse, he suggested that this option could be implemented

by phase, with priority being given to those dwellings affected by traffic noise in excess of 80 dB(A).

45. In reply, PAS for ETW said the Administration had always maintained that it would be most cost-effective to mitigate the noise problems at source. The provision of air-conditioning and double-glazed windows to the affected dwellings was passive and very costly. There were approximately 7 000 dwellings along the four concerned flyovers/road section. If they were to be provided with air-conditioning and double-glazed windows, the capital cost would be around \$350 million assuming an average cost of \$50,000 per dwelling, without counting recurrent and replacement expenditure. Also, it would not be fair to provide noise insulation to some buildings but not others. With a total of approximately 300 000 dwellings affected by excessive traffic noise, the liability on public purse to provide insulation would be at least \$15 billion. As such, the Administration did not consider this a viable option.

46. Ms Cyd HO agreed that the problem of traffic noise should be mitigated at source. She remarked that the use of air-conditioning would increase electricity consumption which could have long-term impact on global climate change.

47. Responding to members' suggestion on providing noise insulation to the affected dwellings by phase, PAS for ETW said that according to the Administration's assessment, about 185 000 residential units were exposed to noise levels in excess of 75 dB(A), while the noise level of about 48 000 residential units was in excess of 80 dB(A). The cost of providing noise insulation would still amount to \$9.2 billion and \$2.4 billion respectively. He further said that the provision of such indirect technical remedies might not be welcomed by all affected residents because they would have to rely on air conditioning and keep the windows closed all the time. He reiterated that for road sections where mitigation at source (e.g. by means of retrofitting with barriers and resurfacing with low noise material) was not technically feasible, the implementation of traffic management schemes might be one of the practical solutions. In the longer term, the noise impact of the existing roads should be addressed through urban renewal.

48. Ms Emily LAU however maintained that the Administration had the responsibility to help relieve the plight of these affected residents. Although a hefty sum was involved, she considered that it would be money well-spent if the livelihood of the residents was improved. In this connection, she also remarked that the Administration should consider whether arrangements for compassionate rehousing could be made for the affected residents.

Admin

Erecting noise barriers

49. In reply to Miss CHAN Yuen-han, PAS for ETW confirmed that the Administration had explored the feasibility of erecting barriers at the concerned flyovers/road sections and found that none of them were technically feasible. It was mainly due to insufficient space and the lack of spare loading capacity for the flyovers to take up extra loading from the noise barriers.

Way forward on the proposed traffic management schemes

Admin

50. Considering the impact of excessive traffic noise on the health and quality of life of the affected residents, Dr LO Wing-lok said that he supported the Administration's proposal to conduct trial closure schemes so that the actual benefits and impact of this traffic management measure could be ascertained. He also pointed out that apart from excessive noise, residents living in close proximity of busy flyovers and roads might also be suffering from other nuisance such as the feeling of vibration of buildings, etc. Apart from the actual reduction in noise level, the implementation of traffic management schemes could also help reduce the level of nuisance and annoyance felt by the affected residents and bring about health benefits. In this connection, he called on the Administration to take the opportunity to gather relevant data so that the actual benefits of this non-engineering measure could be clearly illustrated. Noting the member's suggestion, PAS for ETW agreed that opinion surveys could be conducted as part of the trial to solicit the views of the affected residents on the perceived benefits and impact of the closure schemes.

51. Ms CHOY So-yuk expressed concern about the way forward for addressing the traffic noise of existing roads. She considered that when planning for new developments, the Administration should improve its land use planning so that no more residential buildings would be allowed right next to noisy roads. The Administration should also look into the problem of excessive traffic noise at other locations where residential buildings were built close to flyovers such as Tsing Fung Street.

52. Ms Emily LAU opined that no matter how difficult it was, the Administration must find a way to address the problem. While agreeing that it would be no easy task to strike a right balance between the interests of all parties concerned if access restrictions were to be applied, she stressed that the very real suffering of the residents should not be ignored. Hence, she called on the transport trades to adopt a more understanding attitude and give their support to conducting trial closure schemes at the three locations as proposed by the Administration so that the effectiveness and impact of such a measure could be assessed realistically.

53. Citing the repeated calls from the affected residents and successful overseas experience, Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for the Administration to conduct trial traffic management schemes with a view to addressing the problem of traffic noise. Notwithstanding the strong opposition of the transport trades, he considered that the Administration should have the courage to try out this option. Otherwise, it would be very unfair to those who had been suffering from excessive traffic noise throughout the years. While he also had reservation about imposing full closure at Texaco Flyover, he considered that details of the proposed schemes could be fine-tuned by the Administration in consultation with the concerned parties to ensure that any adverse impact on their operation could be minimized. As to whether permanent schemes should be implemented, he would adopt an open attitude depending on the results of the trial. He would be prepared to reconsider the issue if it was found out that the operation of the transport trades was seriously affected. As such, Mr CHAN called on the transport trades

to adopt a more compassionate attitude towards the plight of the affected residents and consider giving support to the proposed schemes.

54. In response, Mr Ricky WONG stressed that the transport trades were also aware of the problem of excessive traffic noise on nearby residents. But as illustrated by the night-time trial ban of heavy vehicles at West Kowloon Corridor in late 2000, the use of traffic management measures to restrain vehicles from using certain roads was not a real solution to the problem. The noise was merely diverted to the alternative routes at ground level. Hence, the transport trades were of the consensus view that there was no need for the Administration to conduct any further trials. The implementation of any traffic management schemes would indeed have significant adverse impact on the operation and livelihood of the transport trades.

55. While expressing support for the Administration's decision to delay the implementation of the trial scheme at EKC, Mr AU-YEUNG Kun called on members to consider the plight of taxi drivers if they were banned from using the flyovers/road section concerned. As the passengers were no longer able to travel by the most direct and fastest route, they would be less inclined to take taxis. This would have a great impact on the business of the urban taxis trade.

56. Mr HO Hung-fai of Hong Kong Dumper Truck Drivers Association considered it highly unfair that the transport trades should be asked to pay the price for the planning mistakes made by the Administration in having residential units built in close proximity of noisy flyovers/road sections. He also said that given the small size of Hong Kong and the lack of clear separation among residential, commercial and industrial areas, it was not appropriate to make reference to the use of traffic management measures by overseas countries.

57. Mr LAI Kin-tak did not agree that the transport trades were being unreasonable in their opposition to the Administration's proposal. He said that all along, the Administration had failed to provide convincing data to both members and the public that the traffic management schemes could effectively address the problem of excessive traffic noise at the said locations. Given the substantial adverse impact the trial closure schemes would have on the operation of the trades, there was no way the transport trades could give their support in this matter. He was also concerned that such schemes would become precedents and other roads might also be closed for the purpose of noise mitigation. This would have a serious impact on the operation of the transport trades.

58. Mr Richard TSANG reiterated the strong opposition of the transport trades on the proposed closure schemes. He stressed that many transport trades were required to operate at night to serve the general public. If they were banned from using certain flyovers/road sections, their operation would be seriously affected.

59. Mr LEUNG Kun-kuen also said that the transport trades were in support of protecting the environment. However, he stressed that apart from heavy vehicles, there were other noisy vehicles on the road. As such, the Administration should not target heavy vehicles.

60. Both Mr MAN Tak-chuen and Mr LAU Ting-bong reiterated their disappointment with the Administration's decision to shelf the trial closure scheme at EKC. They considered that the Administration should at least give the scheme a try so that its overall impact could be realistically assessed.

Admin 61. The Chairman called on the Administration to consider the following views put forward by members and the attending individuals/deputations at the meeting:

- (a) Recognizing the plight of the affected residents, members generally considered that the Administration should explore ways in which the problem of traffic noise nuisance could be resolved once and for all. In this respect, the Administration should seriously re-consider its stance on providing air-conditioning and double-glazed windows to the affected residents, with those residents living right beside excessively noisy flyovers being given priority.
- (b) On the traffic management schemes, the transport trades considered that the data presented by the Administration failed to convince them that substantial noise benefits would be achieved with the proposed trial closure schemes. They thus queried whether there was indeed a need for such schemes which were implemented at the expense of the interests of the transport trades.
- (c) To address the concern of the transport trades, the Administration would need to have a clear policy in respect of the implementation of traffic management measures to address excessive traffic noise.

62. In response, PAS for ETW recapped that in November 2000, the Administration had adopted a new policy to address the noise impact of existing roads on residents in the neighbourhood. Under this policy, engineering solutions, by way of retrofitting of barriers and enclosures, and resurfacing with low noise material, should be implemented where practicable at existing excessively noisy roads. However, where engineering solutions were impracticable or where engineering solutions alone were inadequate in reducing the noise to an acceptable level, traffic management solutions, such as speed control, traffic diversion and restricting use by heavy vehicles, should be fully explored and implemented where practicable on a case-by-case basis at roads. Based on this guiding principle, traffic management schemes at the chosen locations were proposed.

63. PAS for ETW further said that in order to better assess the way forward, the Administration would like to conduct trial schemes at the proposed locations so that actual data could be collected for assessing the effectiveness of using traffic management measures to address traffic noise, particularly in respect of the resulting traffic diversion and its noise impact as well as potential noise benefits to be achieved. In considering the matter, the Administration would need to maintain a right balance between the interests of all parties concerned. He stressed that a thorough evaluation would be conducted after

the trials and the relevant DCs and the transport trades would be briefed before any decision on implementing the schemes on a permanent basis was made.

Admin

64. After deliberation, members agreed that the joint Panels would conduct a site visit in September to ascertain the noise impact caused by different types of vehicles to the affected dwellings along Texaco Road Flyover during the proposed restriction hours. The Clerk was requested to liaise with the Administration on logistical arrangements for the site visit.

65. Members also agreed to hold another joint meeting to continue discussion with the Administration on the matter. In this connection, the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works would be invited to attend the meeting to brief members on the Administration's policy to address the noise impact of existing roads.

III Any other business

66. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:30 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 November 2002