

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANELS ON
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, TRANSPORT,
AND PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS**

An Update on Proposed Traffic Management Schemes

PURPOSE

This paper provides an update on the proposed traffic management schemes at five locations identified for trial to address traffic noise problems.

BACKGROUND

2. At the meeting of the Joint Panels on Environmental Affairs, Transport, and Planning, Lands and Works held on 15 January 2002, Members noted that the Transport Department (TD) and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had completed traffic surveys and assessed the potential environmental benefits from implementing night-time traffic management measures at five locations identified for trial. The following schemes were proposed for consideration –

- (a) full closure of East Kowloon Corridor;
- (b) full closure of Kwai Chung Road Flyover outside Kwai Fong Estate;
- (c) full closure of Texaco Road Flyover in Tsuen Wan;
- (d) banning of goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes along Ngan Shing Street in Shatin; and
- (e) banning of goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes along Po Lam Road between Kowloon and Tseng Kwan O.

3. At the meeting, Members were also informed that consultations with the relevant District Councils and the transport trade on the proposed schemes were underway. The Administration undertook to provide Members with an update upon completion of the consultations. The consultation results and the proposed way forward for the five schemes are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES AND WAY FORWARD

(a) Full closure of East Kowloon Corridor

4. For the purpose of alleviating night-time traffic noise from the East Kowloon Corridor (EKC), which connects Chatham Road North with Kai Tak Tunnel and spans over Kowloon City Road, it is proposed that the feasibility of closing the EKC completely to vehicular traffic at night time from 1:00 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. should be explored.

Public consultation and assessment

5. The Administration has conducted a traffic impact assessment on the proposed closure which concluded that alternative routes would have sufficient capacity to cope with the detoured traffic from the EKC. There is however no conclusive evidence on the overall environmental benefits of the proposed closure. There would be a reduction in the noise level of about 8dB(A) for residents along the EKC upon its night-time closure. However, residents living along alternative routes would experience an increase in noise level.

6. At the district level, the Kowloon City District Council (KCDC), the Kwun Tong District Council (KTDC) and the Wong Tai Sin District Council (WTSDC) have been consulted. Both the KCDC and KTDC are in support of the proposal and consider the scheme to be a feasible means to address the traffic noise problem in the absence of other measures. The WTSDC does not support the proposal and is of the view that it would only shift the noise problem from one location to another.

7. The WTSDC's view is shared by the trucking industry and the goods vehicle trade who object to the proposed scheme. The urban taxi trade also objects to the proposal and expresses concern that it would cause longer journeys for their passengers, and the "stop and go" movements of vehicles at signalised road junctions along the alternative routes would create more serious noise problems.

Way forward

8. Taking into account the comments received, the Administration plans to conduct a trial closure in late June 2002 for three weeks to assess the effectiveness of the scheme. A thorough evaluation will be conducted and the relevant District Councils and the transport trade will be briefed before any decision on permanent closure is made.

(b) Full closure of Kwai Chung Road Flyover outside Kwai Fong Estate

(c) Full closure of Texaco Flyover in Tsuen Wan

9. The Administration proposes to ban all types of vehicles from using both the Kwai Chung Road Flyover and the Texaco Road Flyover from 12:00 midnight to 6:00 a.m. Vehicular traffic would be diverted to the ground level roads immediately underneath the two flyovers.

Public consultation and assessment

10. The traffic impact assessments conducted by the Administration indicated that the alternative routes would have sufficient capacity to cope with the vehicular traffic diverted from the two flyovers during their night-time closure. On the environmental front, the Administration's assessment is that there would be reduction in the noise level of 1 – 2 dB(A) for certain dwellings along the two flyovers during their closure, and no adverse impact would be felt in other areas as no traffic would be diverted elsewhere. The lower floors of the residential buildings facing the two flyovers are mainly for commercial use.

11. At the district level, the Administration has consulted the Tsuen Wan District Council and the Kwai Tsing District Council. Both Councils do not object to the two proposed schemes. However, the former has requested a review of the effectiveness of the Texaco Road Flyover scheme in three months' time after its implementation while the latter has requested the Administration to consult the transport trade.

12. The public light bus and New Territories taxi trade have been consulted and do not object to the proposed schemes. They have, however, suggested that consideration be given to ban heavy vehicles first before extending the ban to other types of vehicles.

13. The urban taxi trade objects to any permanent or temporary schemes involving road closures which would affect their choice of routes and journey times. They maintain that their business would be adversely affected by the proposed schemes. They also consider the schemes ineffective as the diverted traffic would still create noise problems as a result of the "stop and go" movements of vehicles at signalised road junctions.

14. The trucking industry and the goods vehicles trade did not object to a trial closure to assess the effectiveness of the proposed schemes when consulted in late 2001 and early 2002. They have requested the Administration to brief them on the trial results before the schemes are made permanent. The trade has, however, recently written to the Administration expressing reservations over the proposal.

Way forward

15. The Administration proposes to divert vehicular traffic to the ground level roads immediately underneath the two flyovers with minimal impact on the trip length and journey times. Taking into account the concerns of the transport trade, the Administration will first implement trial schemes to assess their effectiveness. The trial closure of the Kwai Chung Road Flyover is planned to commence in mid July 2002 for three weeks, followed by that of the Texaco Flyover in early August 2002 also for three weeks. The relevant District Councils and the transport trade will be briefed before final decisions are made.

(d) Banning of good vehicles over 5.5 tonnes along Ngan Shing Street in Shatin

16. The proposed scheme seeks to ban goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes along the section of Ngan Shing Street between Siu Lek Yuen Road and Chap Wai Kon Street at night time from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The affected goods vehicles can make use of the alternative route of Chap Wai Kon Street and Siu Lek Yuen Road.

Public consultation and assessment

17. The traffic impact assessment conducted by the Administration indicated that the number of goods vehicles affected during the proposed restriction period would be very small (about 20) and could be easily absorbed by the alternative route. On the environmental front, the Administration's assessment is that the proposed scheme would result in a very slight drop in traffic noise. Nonetheless, the measure would reduce the number of goods vehicles passing through the housing estates and hence the associated noise disturbance.

18. The Shatin District Council was consulted and has expressed support for the proposed scheme. Some local businesses have expressed reservations about the proposal as it might affect their loading/unloading activities during the restriction period.

19. Views of the trucking industry and the goods vehicle trade are diverse. While some have raised no objection, others have expressed reservations on the ground that the proposed scheme would adversely affect the operation of goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes.

Way forward

20. Taking into account the comments received, the Administration proposes to conduct a trial in late August 2002 to assess its effectiveness and impact on the transport trade as well as local business. The STDC and other affected parties will be briefed on the result of the trial before a final decision is made.

(e) Banning of goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes along Po Lam Road between Kowloon and Tseng Kwan O

21. The proposed scheme involves the banning of goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes from using the sections of Po Lam Road and Po Lam North Road between Po Hong Road and Sau Mau Ping Road as well as Anderson Road from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. every day.

Public consultation and assessment

22. According to the traffic impact assessment, the number of goods vehicles affected during the proposed restriction period would be very small (about 17) and could be easily absorbed by the alternative route of Tseng Kwan O Tunnel. On the environmental front, the Administration's assessment is that the noise disturbance from heavy vehicles passing in front of the housing estates along the relevant sections of Po Lam Road and Po Lam North Road would be reduced.

23. Both the Sai Kung District Council (SKDC) and the Kwun Tong District Council (KTDC) were consulted. They do not support the proposed scheme. The SKDC considers that the scheme might not be effective in addressing the traffic noise problem. Instead, it might cause inconvenience to local residents, particularly drivers of heavy goods vehicles. The KTDC is worried that the proposed scheme would cause more noise nuisances to the residents of Tsui Ping Estate, Hong Wah Court and Hing Tin Estate along the alternative route.

24. The trucking industry and the goods vehicle trade have also raised objections to the proposal on the grounds that additional operational costs and time would be incurred.

Way forward

25. In the light of strong local objection, the Administration has decided not to pursue the proposed scheme at the moment.

FOR INFORMATION

26. Members are requested to note the proposed implementation of the trial schemes at East Kowloon Corridor, Kwai Chung Road Flyover, Texaco Flyover and Ngan Shing Street, and the dropping of the scheme at Po Lam Road.

Transport Department
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