

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2450/01-02
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Legislative Council
Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 28 June 2002, at 10:30 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Members absent : Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Public officers attending : **Agenda item V**
Transport Bureau

Mr Arthur HO
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Mr Patrick HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (1)

Transport Department

Mr Robert FOOTMAN
Commissioner for Transport

Mrs Dorothy CHAN
Deputy Commissioner for Transport/
Transport Services & Management

Ms Zina WONG
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Bus and Railway

Mr Carey WONG
Principal Transport Officer/Bus and Railway (2)

Agenda item VI

Transport Bureau

Ms Doris CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (6)

Transport Department

Mr Stephen IP
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/
Management and Paratransit

Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr H C FAN
Project Manager/Project Division

Agenda item VII

Transport Bureau

Mr Arthur HO
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Mr Patrick HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (1)

Transport Department

Mrs Dorothy CHAN
Deputy Commissioner for Transport/
Transport Services & Management

Mr Peter LUK
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/New Territories

Ms Cindy LAW
Principal Transport Officer/Special Duties/New Territories

Mr Carey WONG
Principal Transport Officer/Bus and Railway (2)

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

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

Action

- I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1955/01-02 - Minutes of meeting held on 25 January 2002; and
LC Paper No CB(1)2084/01-02 - Minutes of meeting held on 24 May 2002)

The above minutes of meeting were confirmed.

- II Endorsement of the report of the Panel for submission to the Council**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)2028/01-02 - Draft report of the Panel on Transport for submission to the Legislative Council)

2. Members endorsed the draft report of the Panel for submission to the Legislative Council on 10 July 2002.

Action

III Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1873/01-02(01) - Submissions on the use of hazard warning light; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1899/01-02(01) - New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited - Fuller disclosure of financial and operational information)

3. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting.
4. Mr Albert CHAN remarked that there was concern over the high holiday fares of New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited. He suggested to include the item in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel. Members agreed.
5. Members noted that in order to address members' concerns raised at previous meetings, the Administration had provided the following follow-up papers to the Panel:
 - (a) Supplementary information note on Electronic Audible Traffic Signal (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(01));
 - (b) A letter from the Secretary for Transport on Review of the Operation of Public Light Buses (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(02));
 - (c) Supplementary information note on Chok Ko Wan Link Road, Dualling of Hang Hau Road and Ting Kok Road Upgrading, Stage 1, Phase II (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(03));
 - (d) Supplementary information note on Territory-wide Review on Provision of Escalator Links/Elevator Systems (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(04));
 - (e) Supplementary information note on Gazettal of the Revised Alignment of Route 10 Southern Section (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(05));
 - (f) Supplementary information note on Central Kowloon Route (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(06)); and
 - (g) Supplementary information note on Report on Parking Demand and Supply and the Second Parking Demand Study (LC Paper No. CB(1)2130/01-02(07)).
6. On the supplementary information note on Report on Parking Demand and Supply and the Second Parking Demand Study, the Chairman remarked that the paper did not contain sufficient information on the size, distribution and location of parking sites for goods vehicles and coaches to be made available after the implementation of the

Action

proposed remedial measures. Mr Albert CHAN was also concerned that in some districts, the ownership of parking spaces was concentrated in the hands of certain companies, thereby leading to an upsurge in parking fees. He also expressed concern on the shortage of motor cycle parking spaces in the territory. At his suggestion, members agreed to follow up on the subject matter at a future meeting.

7. Ir Dr Raymond HO had suggested to follow up on the widening of Tolo Highway, particularly the design and provision of noise barriers along the route. Members agreed to include the item in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

IV Items for discussion at the meeting on 12 July 2002

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2085/01-02(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion;
and
LC Paper No. CB(1)2085/01-02(02) - List of follow-up actions)

8. Members agreed to discuss the following two items raised by the Administration at the forthcoming meeting to be held on 12 July 2002:

- (a) High-speed traveller; and
- (b) Commissioning of Tseung Kwan O Line and Tseung Kwan O Line fares.

V Motions on public bus franchise terms

LC Paper No. CB(1)2108/01-02(01) - Supplementary information paper provided by the Administration; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)1764/01-02(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration

9. The Chairman recapitulated that at the last meeting held on 24 May 2002, members discussed the Administration's assessment of the applications from Citybus (Franchise for Airport and North Lantau routes), Long Win Bus Company Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited to renew their franchises for ten years to take effect upon expiry of their current franchises in 2003 and the major changes to the terms of the proposed new franchises. In this connection, Mr LAU Kong-wah, Mr Abraham SHEK and Mr Albert CHAN proposed three motions on public bus franchise terms. However, in view of time constraint, the motions could not be dealt with at the meeting. Subsequent to the meeting on 24 May 2002, the Administration had provided a supplementary information note on measures proposed by the three bus operators to enhance the efficiency of their operation and on a number of proposed changes to the terms of the franchises vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 2108/01-02(01).

Action

10. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Bus and Railway (AC for T/B&R) briefed members on the salient points in the paper.

11. The Chairman then invited members to speak on their motions.

12. Mr LAU Kong-wah proposed the following motion for consideration of the Panel:

"That this Panel urges the Administration, in renewing the existing franchises of Citybus Limited (Airport and North Lantau routes), Long Win Bus Company Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited, to include a new franchise term which requires the franchised bus companies to undertake that consideration will be given to various relevant factors such as public affordability, the companies' operating conditions, etc. when they submit applications of fare adjustments, including the increase or reduction of fares, to the relevant authorities for approval." (Translation)

13. After deliberation, Mr LAU Kong-wah indicated that he would not move his motion as the Administration had agreed to introduce a clause in the proposed new franchises to the effect that the grantees would take into account a basket of factors including public affordability and the operating conditions of the grantees when applying for adjustment to bus fares.

14. The Chairman then invited Mr Abraham SHEK to speak on his motion.

15. Mr Abraham SHEK indicated that he was satisfied with the Administration's reply given in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the paper. As such, he would withdraw his motion as printed in the agenda. He however reminded the Administration not to intervene in the workings of the market because Hong Kong espoused the free market mechanism.

16. The Chairman invited Mr Albert CHAN to speak on his motion.

17. Mr Albert CHAN indicated that the Administration should formulate a policy to implement concessionary Bus-Bus Interchange (BBI) schemes at all new towns and interchanges at strategic routes. Fare discount arrangements similar to those implemented in Shing Mun Tunnel Interchange and Tai Lam Tunnel Interchange should be introduced across-the-board to ensure that the combined fares of the first leg and second leg of a journey should not exceed the original fare of the second leg of the journey. Given the heavy financial burden of the travelling commuters, it was a sign of dereliction of duty of the Administration if they failed to implement concessionary BBI schemes. He hoped the Administration would take the franchise renewal opportunity to rectify the situation at Lantau Link Toll Plaza.

Action

18. Mr Albert CHAN also queried whether it was appropriate to renew the franchises of the three bus companies for ten years. He remarked that the Administration had not widely consulted the general public on the franchise renewal exercise. He relayed the concerns of the Tung Chung residents that concessionary BBI schemes should be introduced and that the duration of the new franchises should be cut short.

19. In response, AC for T/B&R explained that the introduction of a concessionary BBI scheme involved a number of considerations. These included the feasibility of the scheme, its commercial viability, efficiency in the use of resources, selection of routes, traffic impact, and impact on passengers and other public transport operators which would all need to be examined carefully. The Administration would need to consider each case on its own merits but it would continue to encourage and facilitate bus operators to introduce more concessionary BBI schemes as a matter of priority.

Admin 20. Mr LAU Chin-shek requested the Administration to provide information on the details of the concessionary BBI schemes provided by the three bus companies. AC for T/B&R agreed to provide the information as requested after the meeting.

21. On the duration of franchises, AC for T/B&R advised that in handling bus franchises in recent years, in order to assess the performance of new operators, a franchise period of five to six years would normally be granted to new operators. For those existing operators who had proved themselves to be capable of providing proper and efficient service and willing to invest, a new ten-year franchise would be granted to them upon application for renewal of their current franchises. She said that such an arrangement would ensure the interests of both bus passengers and the company including its staff. On the passenger side, a proper and efficient service would continue to be made available to the general public. On the company side, a longer franchise duration would enable the bus companies to plan ahead and improve their services through continued investment and to provide a more stable environment for their workforce.

22. On consultation, AC for T/B&R advised that the Administration had maintained regular dialogue with local District Councils (DCs) on proposed changes and improvements to public transport services, and the local DCs were also consulted on the five-year Route Development Plan put forward by various bus companies each year. Having reviewed the performance of the relevant bus companies, the Administration recommended the renewal of their franchises for ten years.

23. Mr Albert CHAN was not convinced of the Administration's reply. He remarked that residents in Tung Chung areas would like to see the early implementation of concessionary BBI schemes and introduction of new services. Unless the problems were rectified, he strongly objected to renewing the franchise period of the bus companies for another ten years.

Action

24. AC for T/B&R replied that she appreciated the member's concern about the provision of bus services in Tung Chung areas. She briefed members that in line with growth in population and demand, the Administration was considering the possibility of diverting a bus route to ply between Yat Tung Estate and the urban area. BBI schemes would also be introduced in Tung Chung New Town. However, as regards the proposal to implement BBI schemes at Lantau Link Toll Plaza, the Administration would need to carefully consider its feasibility, taking into account the long lead time in arranging empty despatches from Tung Chung to the Toll Plaza to pick up interchange passengers if required.

25. AC for T/B&R advised that in accordance with the legal advice sought, the terms of a franchise must be clear and precise and in line with the Public Bus Services Ordinance (Cap. 230) (PBSO). Under the PBSO, the scale of bus fares was determined by the Chief Executive in Council. The Commissioner for Transport had no legal authority to direct a bus company to reduce its fares or to grant concessionary fares to bus passengers. The suggestion to add a provision in the proposed new franchises to require the grantees to implement concessionary BBI schemes as instructed by the Commissioner was therefore inconsistent with the existing provisions in the PBSO and might result in legal challenge. The Administration therefore did not support the motion to be moved by Mr Albert CHAN.

26. Mr TAM Yiu-chung remarked that the Administration should review the planning of bus services in Tung Chung and introduce concessionary BBI schemes as appropriate. However there was also a need to consider the legal view sought by the Administration concerning the proposed motion. On the duration of the franchises, he said that a longer duration would provide a more stable environment for the concerned workforce.

27. Mr Albert CHAN said that as the Administration was in the course of negotiation with the bus companies on the new franchise terms, he did not understand why the proposal would be inconsistent with the existing provisions in the PBSO if the bus companies accepted the new franchise terms in return for the continued operation of the services. The Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS for T) added that there was no reason for bus companies to accept a franchise term which was inconsistent with the existing provisions in the law. Even if they raised no comments, the Administration considered it inappropriate to include such a term in the franchise which was not in line with the existing provisions in the law.

28. Mr Albert CHAN was not convinced of the Administration's reply. He then moved the following motion at the meeting:

"That this Panel urges the Administration, in renewing the existing franchises of Citybus Limited (Airport and North Lantau routes), Long Win Bus Company Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited, to include a new franchise

Action

term which requires the franchised bus companies to implement concessionary bus-bus interchange schemes as instructed by the Commissioner for Transport." (Translation)

29. Mr CHAN's motion was put to vote. Five members including Mr Andrew WONG, Mr LAU Chin-shek, Mr CHENG Kar-foo, Mr Albert CHAN and Mr WONG Sing-chi voted for the motion. Eight members including Mr Abraham SHEK, Ir Dr Raymond HO, Mrs Selina CHOW, Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, Mr LAU Kong-wah, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Fu-wah voted against.

30. The Chairman declared that the motion was not carried.

VI Replacement of traffic control and surveillance system in Cross Harbour Tunnel

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2085/01-02(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

31. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (6) (PAS for T(6)) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to replace the traffic control and surveillance system (TCSS) in Cross Harbour Tunnel (CHT). She said that the existing TCSS in CHT was reaching the end of its serviceable life. The maintenance of the system was getting increasingly difficult. The Administration needed a modern TCSS to ensure safe, reliable, cost-effective and efficient tunnel operation. Members noted that the financial proposal would be submitted to the Finance Committee (FC) for consideration at its meeting to be held on 12 July 2002.

Financial implications

32. Members noted that the capital cost of the project was estimated to be \$112 million. The Project Manager/Project Division of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (PM/PD) advised that the estimate was drawn up based on existing market information. The Administration was aware that new technology might emerge in the course of development. The Administration would try to adopt the latest technology within the budget constraint. The life span of the new system would be 15 to 20 years.

Implementation programme

33. Mr Abraham SHEK queried why it took 50 months for the project to complete. Given the rapid development in technology, he was worried that by the time the project was completed, the system would become outdated. The Chairman shared the view of Mr SHEK and opined that timely completion of the project was necessary in order to avoid wastage of public monies. Mr CHENG Kar-foo also questioned why it took two

Action

years for the Administration to conduct the relevant studies before tendering, and sought information on the complexity of the project. He opined that there was room for expediting the implementation programme by compressing the time required for each task.

34. Mrs Selina CHOW opined that there was a need for the Administration to change its mindset for taking forward public works projects. It was totally unacceptable for the Administration to take four and a half years to implement a project of this scale which cost only \$112 million. She said that prior to this submission, the Administration should have been worked on the project for quite some time and must have some ideas about what the system requirements were. If so, the Administration should not drag on the project and instead, should go straight to the market to see how its requirements could be met.

35. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah however held a different view. He opined that as the existing TCSS in CHT was in operation, the Administration should not aim at squeezing the completion time of the new system at the expense of the quality of the new system. There was a need to conduct detailed studies to ensure the safety and reliability of the system.

36. PM/PD explained that in view of the heavily trafficked condition of CHT and its approach roads, there was a need to carry out a detailed traffic and civil engineering study to ascertain whether it was technically feasible to install the new traffic control facilities at various locations. Further, the Administration saw the merits of conducting a system engineering study to ensure the adoption of the latest technology in the market before inviting tenders for implementing the new system. Among various components in the system, the Automatic Incident Detection System (AIDS), which monitored the statistical traffic parameters collected from detection stations to determine whether an incident had happened, was the most complicated one. Different vendors had indicated that new features were being examined and would be launched in the market shortly. As such, the Administration needed time to examine the product features and include the specific requirements in the project brief before inviting tenders. On the time required for installation, testing and commissioning, it would take 22 months to complete as only night works would be allowed.

37. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that from an engineering point of view, he agreed that it might take a longer time for system installation, testing and commissioning. However, the Administration should consider expediting the implementation programme by compressing the time required for the traffic and civil engineering study and system engineering study to one year. The time required for the detailed design stage might also be shortened to nine months, bearing in mind existing products might already be available in the market. Likewise, pre-qualification and tendering could be carried out in parallel and completed within six months.

Action

Admin

38. The Chairman summarized the views of members and urged the Administration to expedite the implementation programme of the project without adversely affecting the safety and reliability of the system. PM/PD took note of the Panel's view and said that the Administration would review the implementation programme and provide further information in the paper to be submitted to FC.

Main features of the system

39. Ir Dr Raymond HO sought information on the main features of the AIDS. He enquired whether the system would assist operators to detect fire incidents or excessive vehicle emissions. He opined that as equipment had already been installed to measure the overall air quality inside the tunnel, it might be technically feasible to link this system with the closed-circuit television (CCTV) system, so that the latter would automatically pan to the vehicle which emitted excessive smoke or pollutants.

40. PM/PD advised that the Administration would arrange to install a traffic control and surveillance system in the tunnel to facilitate monitoring. Regarding the main features of the proposed AIDS, he explained that the AIDS would assist operators to detect, inter alia, the sudden stoppage of vehicles. On detection and tracking of fire incidents and excessive vehicle emissions, there was no proven technology in the market.

41. In response to Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, PM/PD confirmed that variable message signs (VMSs) including congested signs would be installed under the new TCSS. Journey time indicators on approach roads to CHT would be installed under a separate project.

Admin

42. At the request of the Chairman, the Administration undertook to provide further information on the main features of the proposed system in the paper to be submitted to FC.

43. Mr LAU Kong-wah opined that the location of some VMSs should be reviewed so that motorists could be given earlier warning about tunnel traffic condition. Despite his previous comments made on the same, he was disappointed to note that the Administration had not given due consideration to his suggestion. In his opinion, additional signs should be placed at strategic locations where motorists would be able to choose all other cross-harbour routes at the first instance upon reading the messages displayed on the VMSs. Otherwise, it would be a waste of resources. In this regard, he suggested that additional signs be placed on Waterloo Road southbound near Baptist Hospital. Likewise, as the VMSs installed at the Airport Tunnel at Kowloon Bay was a separate system and controlled by the tunnel company, he considered it necessary to synchronize the existing system at the Airport Tunnel with the one under examination. Alternatively, the Administration needed to install additional signs in the vicinity of To Kwa Wan to enable motorists to make an earlier decision on the choice of cross-harbour

Action

routes. It would be too late if motorists were already driving on the East Kowloon Corridor if they wished to switch to other harbour crossings .

44. Mr Tommy CHEUNG also said that additional VMSs should be placed at Waterloo southbound to enable motorists to make use of Pui Ching Road to switch to Western Harbour Crossing upon reading the messages displayed on the VMSs.

45. The Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Management and Paratransit (AC for T/M&P) advised that the locations selected were only preliminary proposal. The Administration would consider the members' suggestion.

Admin

46. The Chairman requested the Administration to consider the members' suggestion and provide more details on the alternative cross-harbour routes for each proposed locations in the paper to be submitted to FC.

Project management charges by Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund

47. Mr CHENG Kar-foo enquired the rationale for engaging the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) as the project manager at a cost of \$9.8 million. He asked whether the Administration had ever considered tendering out the project and whether the proposed consultancy fees by EMSD, which was about 10% of the estimated project cost, was in line with other public works projects.

48. Mr Abraham SHEK also opined that without an open tendering exercise, it might be difficult to ascertain whether the fees charged by EMSD were the lowest in the market. It was also not appropriate for EMSD to compete for profit with the private sector.

49. AC for T/M&P explained that in view of the strategic importance of CHT, the Administration considered that it was in the best interest of the public for EMSD, who was a reliable and incumbent monitoring agent of the TCSS and other systems of CHT, to undertake the project to ensure smooth and prompt implementation. Also, given that the Transport Department (TD) did not have any in-house expertise to oversee the performance of the consultancy firm, even if one was employed, TD would have to pay a separate sum to EMSD for their service to manage and monitor the works of the consultant.

50. Mr Abraham SHEK was not convinced of the Administration's reply. He said that the private sector should have sufficient expertise in undertaking the related tasks.

51. Ir Dr Raymond HO held a different view. He opined that EMSD was only allowed to compete with the private sector for government contracts but not others in the private sector. As such, there was no question of EMSD competing for profit with the private sector. He cited an example whereby EMSD failed to obtain a contract at the

Action

Hong Kong International Airport. Without sufficient jobs for EMSD, there would be implications on the continued employment of its workforce. He therefore opined that priority should be given to EMSD if it was able to perform jobs planned by the Administration. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (6) said that the Administration would need to consider further the member's suggestion as it involved wider policy issue.

Admin

52. In view of members' concern the subject matter, the Chairman requested the Administration to include additional information on the reason for engaging EMSD as the project manager in the paper to be submitted to FC.

Training

53. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah indicated his support for the proposal. He however was concerned whether sufficient training would be provided to existing staff in the course of replacement.

54. AC for T/M&P advised that suitable training would be provided throughout the testing and implementation phases. The Administration would liaise with the tunnel company and the contractor to ensure that the operation of the tunnel would not be affected.

55. The Chairman remarked that under the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), comprehensive traffic control and surveillance facilities including VMSs would be installed. She cautioned the Administration to make better integration of ITS and the proposed system under consideration to avoid wastage of resources.

VII Better co-ordination of public transport services arising from the commissioning of MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension (Phase I)

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2085/01-02(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)872/01-02(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

56. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/New Territories (AC for T/NT) briefed members on the outcome of the consultation in respect of the Administration's plan to reorganize the public transport network in Tseung Kwan O (TKO) new town and adjacent area in connection with the opening of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension (TKE). Taking into account the comments and views received, the Administration had revised its proposals which included introduction of new routes, frequency adjustments and re-routeing of some existing routes, and route modification/cancellation of some other services. The implementation of the

Action

reorganization proposals would be gradual and by phases, with due regard to the changes in passengers' travel pattern.

57. Mr CHENG Kar-foo commended the efforts expended by TD in consulting the local community and DCs before finalizing the reorganization proposals. Mr LAU Kong-wah also commended the efforts expended by TD in balancing the interests of different districts and coming up with a public transport service plan which was largely accepted by different districts.

58. Mr CHENG Kar-foo remarked that the Council had passed a motion urging the Government to discuss with the two railway corporations to ensure that the decreased construction costs of the West Rail and the TKE were factored in the fares of the rail lines, so as to alleviate the burden of transport expenses on the public. As railway fares would have significant impact on the public transport service plan including the restructuring of bus services and revision of bus fares, he reminded the Administration to pay special attention to the fare determination of railway fares. He also urged the Administration to ensure that the Panel should be briefed on the proposed fares of the TKE, prior to briefing the press. DS for T said that he would relay Mr CHENG's request to the MTR Corporation Limited for consideration.

59. Mr CHENG Kar-foo enquired whether the Administration had ever discussed with the bus companies the possibility of fare reduction upon commissioning of the TKE. He reiterated his view that the bus fares in TKO were excessively high and should be lowered to relieve the burden of the travelling commuters. Mr LAU Kong-wah echoed the view of Mr CHENG. He said that he had all along discussed the subject matter with the Administration. With the commissioning of the TKE, he hoped that the bus fares, particularly those of cross-harbour routes, could be adjusted downward. He also asked whether the Administration had specifically requested the bus companies to reduce their fares. Mr TAM Yiu-chung also remarked that the bus fares in TKO district, particularly the cross-harbour routes, were excessively high. He urged the Administration to liaise with the bus companies to lower the fares.

60. The Principal Transport Officer/Special Duties (New Territories) (PTO/SD) replied that the Administration was liaising with the concerned bus companies on the possibility of reduction of fares on those Tseung Kwan O bus routes, including cross-harbour routes, which would have changes in routing and/or journey distance under the network re-organization plan, taking into account the views expressed by local DCs. Proposals would be presented to the local DCs.

Action

Implementation plan

61. Noting that the reorganization proposals would be implemented in phases, Mr CHENG Kar-foo enquired about the factors to be considered in determining the timing and priority of implementation. Mr LAU Kong-wah also urged the Administration to review the actual traffic pattern before effecting the route cancellation proposals. Local DCs should also be consulted.

62. PTO/SD replied that about one week prior to the commissioning of the TKE, the re-routing proposals of some existing routes and the relocation of bus termini to the TKE stations would be implemented. On the date of commissioning, new routes would be introduced and existing services be strengthened to feed passengers to the TKE stations. Minor changes to services and some route cancellations such as feeder routes to existing MTR stations would take place only after the first week. Major route changes would be effected progressively about two weeks after the new school term started in September. The Administration would review the traffic pattern and work hand-in-hand with local bodies before actual implementation.

VIII Any other business

63. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:30 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

19 September 2002