

## **Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

### **Information Note on Progress of Trial Green Minibus Scheme on Route 3**

#### **Purpose**

This note provides an update on the progress of the trial green minibus (“GMB”) scheme on Route 3 for Members’ information.

#### **Background**

2. At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on 28 November 2003, Members were briefed on the proposed trial scheme for facilitating incumbent drivers of red minibuses (“RMBs”) operating in the service area of the West Rail to operate GMB services via Route 3. Members in general supported the trial scheme.

#### **Latest Developments**

3. Registration of incumbent drivers for the trial scheme started on 18 December 2003. To ensure sufficient publicity on the opening of the registration, Transport Department (“TD”) has taken the following steps –

- (a) issued a press release on 18 December 2003;
- (b) issued separate letters to RMB and GMB Operators’ Associations inviting applications from eligible members;
- (c) distributed application forms and guidance notes directly to the incumbent RMB drivers from 6 a.m. on 19 December 2003 to 6 a.m. on the following day at suitable locations along the existing RMB routes between Yuen Long and urban areas; and
- (d) made available the application forms and guidance notes on TD’s website and at TD Headquarters, the Kowloon and New Territories Regional Office and the Licensing Branch Offices.

4. The application period closed on 5 January 2004. Since the average daily patronage of West Rail after its opening is around 100,000 as compared with the forecast daily patronage of 200,000 by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation, the impact of West Rail on RMB services operating between North West New Territories and the urban area is not as great as envisaged. The number of applications received for registering for the trial scheme is smaller than expected. A total of 69 applications were received. Out of these, 43 were received on or before the deadline and the other 26 are late applications. TD consulted ICAC as to whether the late applications should be accepted. ICAC's view is that accepting the late applications will not be fair to the eligible incumbent drivers who submitted their applications before the specified deadline.

5. A Vetting Committee comprising representatives from TD and the Police has considered all the applications in accordance with the pre-determined eligibility criteria and decided that –

- (a) all the 26 late applications should be rejected; and
- (b) among the 43 applications received on or before the deadline, 36 of them should be eligible. The other 7 applications should be rejected due to their failure to provide proof of incumbent RMB drivers.

6. TD issued letters to applicants on 22 March 2004 to inform them of the results of their applications. Unsuccessful applicants may apply for a review within seven working days from the date of TD's notification. An Appeal Committee will be formed as necessary to consider any appeals received.

7. Since the number of eligible applicant drivers is not adequate for operating more than one GMB routes, TD will pursue the trial scheme with one trial route to operate between Yuen Long and Jordan, instead of three trial routes as originally proposed. Some of the RMB drivers concerned have indicated a wish to adjust the routing of the trial GMB route between Yuen Long and Jordan to avoid congested areas in Jordan

and busy corridors in Yuen Long. TD is discussing the proposal with them and will ask the 36 eligible applicant drivers to arrive at a consensus among themselves if the proposed adjustment to the trial route is to be pursued.

8. TD will meet with the eligible applicant drivers to discuss the operational details and will arrange a workshop on formation of companies for the drivers to facilitate their joining together to set up a company to operate the trial GMB route. TD will impress upon them the importance of having an adequate number of drivers joining together to form a company in order to meet the minimum service requirements of 10 vehicles with 20 eligible incumbent RMB drivers for the trial GMB route between Yuen Long and Jordan, and the possibility of a new round of application for registration in case they fail to form a company to operate the trial route in accordance with the minimum service requirements. The intention is to have the trial route put into place in mid 2004.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau  
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