

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)1087/03-04  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

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**Panel on Transport**

**Subcommittee on matters relating to railways**

**Minutes of meeting on  
Thursday, 8 January 2004, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP (Chairman)  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP  
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, JP  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon WONG Sing-chi

**Members absent** : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP  
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP  
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

**Public Officers attending** : **Agenda Item IV**  
  
Mr Arthur HO  
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works  
  
Mr Raymond HO  
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mrs Christina KWONG  
Government Engineer/Railway Development  
Highways Department

Ms Carolina YIP  
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/  
Bus & Railway

Ms Alice AU-YEUNG  
Principal Transport Officer/Bus & Railway  
Transport Department

**Attendance by  
invitation : Agenda Item IV**

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr Samuel LAI  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Mr K K LEE  
Senior Director, Capital Projects

Mr Joseph CHOI  
General Manager, Construction

Mrs Irene YAU  
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

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

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

Miss Winnie CHENG  
Legislative Assistant 5

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**I Confirmation of minutes of meeting and matters arising**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)701/03-04 - Minutes of meeting held on 25 November 2003)

The minutes of meeting held on 25 November 2003 were confirmed.

**II Information papers issued since last meeting**

2. Members noted that no information paper was issued since last meeting.

**III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 5 March 2004**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)690/03-04(01) - List of railways and projects)

3. Members expressed grave concern about the arson attack on MTR train at the Admiralty Station on 5 January 2004, and agreed to discuss the item proposed by the Administration on "Railway corporations' preventive and response measures for emergency incidents" at the next meeting scheduled for 5 March 2004. Members further agreed that the following issues would also be discussed at the meeting:

- (a) incident report of the arson attack on 5 January 2004;
- (b) possible amendments to the Mass Transit Railway Bylaw to further enhance railway safety as raised by Mr LAU Kong-wah; and
- (c) provision of emergency facilities inside train cars as raised by Mr Albert CHAN who was particularly concerned about the possible use of ventilation windows inside MTR train cars to allow for emergency evacuation of passengers.

4. As a related issue, Mr Albert CHAN referred to the site visit organized by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) on 6 January 2004 to inspect the Corporation's safety measures and emergency facilities, and expressed grave concern that some members had participated in the event in their capacity as members of the Transport Panel/the Subcommittee, while the majority of other members of the Panel/the Subcommittee members had not been informed at all. He was gravely dissatisfied that MTRCL had selectively invited members of the Panel/the Subcommittee to attend the site visit. Moreover, he stressed the need for Chairman of the Panel/the Subcommittee to safeguard the equal right of participation by all members of the Panel/the Subcommittee in similar activities organized for the Panel/the Subcommittee. Individual members should also avoid giving the impression that they were speaking in their capacity as Chairman of the Panel/the Subcommittee unless they were attending official activities of the Panel/the Subcommittee.

5. In response, the Chairman clarified that the said event was a press conference held by MTRCL on 6 January 2004, and it was not a site visit organized by the

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Subcommittee. Indeed, she learnt about the press conference shortly before it was due to start when she was calling some MTRCL staff on other businesses. She was given to know that two other Members including the Chairman of the Panel would attend the press conference. Having received the information, she had immediately contacted the Clerk to see what arrangements could be made. As the press conference would start in 10 minutes' time, it was indeed not possible to properly inform other Subcommittee members within such short notice. She thus decided to attend on her own.

6. Mr CHENG Kar-foo also said that he was likewise notified by MTRCL on very short notice in the morning of 6 January 2004. Sharing Mr Albert CHAN's concern, he pointed out given the public role of Legislative Council Members, the difference between their official and personal capacities might not be readily discernible. Hence, it was incumbent upon Chairman of the Panel/the Subcommittee to exercise due caution in their public appearances so as to avoid creating misunderstanding. As far as logistics was concerned, he said that better arrangements might be made in future if Chairman of the Panel/the Subcommittee could contact the Clerk in the first instance so that other members could be properly informed.

7. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that as Chairman of the Transport Panel, he had approached MTRCL after the arson incident to see whether a site visit could be organized for Panel members to inspect the incident train car. In the morning of 6 January 2004, he was invited by MTRCL to visit its depot to inspect the Corporation's emergency facilities and contingency measures. Under the circumstances, it was neither realistic nor fair to ask other Panel members to make special arrangements to attend the visit within such short notice. He stressed that all along, his intention was to arrange a separate site visit for the Panel, and that he was attending the visit in his personal capacity upon invitation by MTRCL.

8. Mr Abraham SHEK considered that it would be useful to impress upon MTRCL the need to make better arrangements when inviting members of the Panel/the Subcommittee to attend its official functions. The Chairman also said that in case similar briefings were arranged for the press in future, MTRCL should, as far as practicable, consider inviting members of the Panel/the Subcommittee to join.

9. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that recently, the Administration had sought to introduce various changes to the railway development projects recommended under the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS-2000), such as the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) and South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL). This had caused a substantial variation to the original planning framework for further expansion of Hong Kong's railway network under RDS-2000. He considered that the Subcommittee should review with the Government its overall planning for future development of Hong Kong's railway network, taking into account the changing circumstances.

10. The Chairman shared Ir Dr HO's concern and suggested that in order to allow more focussed discussion on the wider issues involved with the overall development of Hong Kong's railway network, the Subcommittee should deal with the SCL project

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first. In discussing the project at the meeting on 29 September 2003, the Administration had agreed that it would revert to the Subcommittee on its decision as to whether the extension of East Rail (ER) or East Kowloon Line (EKL) would be adopted for SCL in providing the Fourth Harbour Crossing (FHC). The item was originally scheduled for discussion at the present meeting, but had been deferred subsequently at the Administration's request. Separately, the SIL project was being kept under view by the Transport Panel as its implementation would have implications on other public transport operators.

11. Members agreed that the Subcommittee would hold a special meeting on 16 February 2004 to discuss the scheme design of SCL including the FHC option with the Administration and the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC). In this connection, Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern that any further delay to the project might render the original implementation timetable unattainable.

12. Members further agreed that the Subcommittee would discuss the wider issues raised by Ir Dr Raymond HO in relation to the Government's overall planning for future development of Hong Kong's railway network before the end of the current legislative session.

## **IV Progress update on Ma On Shan Rail and Tsim Sha Tsui Extension and the proposed public transport service plan to tie in with the commissioning of the two railway projects**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)690/03-04(02) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

13. Members noted the information paper provided by the Administration on the subject matter (LC Paper No. CB(1)690/03-04(02)).

14. With the aid of PowerPoint, Mr K K LEE, Senior Director, Capital Projects of KCRC (SD/CP, KCRC), took members through the progress of the East Rail Extensions (ERE) which comprised the Ma On Shan Rail Link (MOSR) and the Tsim Sha Tsui Extension (TSTE). Both MOSR and TSTE were scheduled for commissioning by end 2004.

## MOSR

### *General progress*

15. While noting the general progress of the MOSR project as reported by the Corporation (Annex B to LC Paper No. CB(1)690/03-04(02)), Mr Albert CHAN asked whether there were any outstanding adverse issues being dealt with by KCRC, in particular those related to the project costs, the construction and installation of civil engineering works or railway systems works.

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16. In reply, SD/CP, KCRC confirmed that although certain amount of technical difficulties had been encountered during the construction of MOSR and TSTE, no major outstanding issues were being dealt with by the Corporation. The Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works also said that the Administration was satisfied that good progress had been achieved for ERE to date.

17. Responding to members' further enquiry, Mr Samuel LAI, Acting Chief Executive Officer of KCRC (ACEO of KCRC), said that MOSR and TSTE would be completed within the original project cost estimate of \$16.3 billion. Testing for the performance of individual systems and then their integrated compatibility was scheduled to commence in March/April 2004, to be followed by trial operations. The Corporation was committed to commissioning MOSR by the end of 2004.

*Co-ordination with other public transport services*

18. The Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Bus & Railway (AC for T/B&R) briefed members on the Administration's plan to consult the public about the proposed public transport service plan (PT plan) to tie in with the opening of MOSR. Consultation with the relevant District Councils would start from February/March 2004. The target was to finalize the PT plan in mid-2004 so that adequate publicity could be mounted before MOSR's opening.

19. Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that the planning intention had always been for MOSR to connect with SCL via EKL as FHC so as to provide through train service for passengers in Ma On Shan to the Central Business District of Hong Kong Island. However, should the Administration adopt ER across the harbour option, instead of extending EKL as originally planned, the attractiveness of MOSR to Ma On Shan residents as an external transport service would be seriously undermined. This would have great impact on the financial viability of MOSR.

20. Mr CHENG Kar-foo further said that unlike West Rail (WR) with convenient Light Rail feeder services, and MTR Tseung Kwan O Line (TKL) with a substantial proportion of its catchment population living within close proximity of TKL stations, MOSR did not have a strong and reliable ridership base. If local residents did not consider MOSR a convenient alternative, they would continue to take feeder services to the KCR Tai Wai Station for interchanging with ER. Or else, they would continue to rely on franchised buses for external transport services. He stressed that when formulating the PT plan, the Administration must not follow the approach adopted previously for WR and TKL. Instead of cancelling overlapping services within three to six months after the opening of MOSR, the existing level of franchised bus services must be maintained to ensure commuters' choice. In the meantime, the Administration should expedite the implementation of SCL so as to minimize the service and time gap between MOSR and SCL. Similar views were expressed by Mr WONG Sing-chi.

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21. Mr Albert CHAN was also concerned about the service gap between MOSR and SCL, and requested the Administration to arrange to brief members on its decision as early as possible. As far as the PT plan was concerned, he considered that the Administration should make an early commitment to maintain the existing level of public transport services serving the Ma On Shan area in order to put the mind of local residents at ease. Any service changes should only be introduced progressively in view of the actual change of the passengers' travel pattern was clearly established after MOSR's opening.

22. Mr LAU Kong-wah relayed the sentiment from local residents that they were already served by a well-connected franchised bus network and that MOSR, when completed, should only perform a supplementary role. As MOSR could not provide direct and convenient train service for passengers in Ma On Shan to the Central Business District of Hong Kong Island, he called on the Administration to respect the wish of local residents that the existing level of franchised bus services be maintained after the opening of MOSR.

23. In response, the Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (DS for ETW) said that the Government's transport strategy was to place emphasis on rail transport and the co-ordination of public transport services. With the opening of MOSR, the capacity of external public transport services for Ma On Shan New Town would be increased by 34%. Given the fast, reliable and convenient service provided by MOSR, there would be substantial changes to the travel pattern of passengers, in particular those travelling to or from the urban areas.

24. DS for ETW further said that considering the possible changes to passengers' travel pattern, the Government would improve co-ordination of public transport services to better match changing demand and minimize wasteful competition. This would include strengthening feeder services to MOSR stations. Where appropriate, franchised bus services in the area would be rationalized for both environmental and transport benefits. In doing so, he stressed that it would be most important to consult local views carefully so that a proper balance could be maintained. Service changes would also be introduced in a progressive manner in the light of on-the-ground observation.

25. Responding to Mr LAU Kong-wah's call for the provision of free feeder services by KCR buses, ACEO of KCRC said that the Corporation would actively consider any suggestions that could enhance the connectivity of MOSR for the convenience of passengers. In this connection, DS for ETW cautioned that while the provision of free feeder services would be welcomed by the passengers, it might impact on the operation of other public transport services. Hence, the matter would have to be considered carefully taking into account the interests of all parties concerned.

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*MOSR fares*

26. Mr CHENG Kar-foo maintained that without a highly competitive fare level with interchange discounts as well as an efficient and convenient interchange for passengers at KCR Tai Wai Station, MOSR would not be an attractive alternative to the local residents. As such, he restated his strong request that the Administration should not force the passengers to use MOSR by cancelling existing franchised bus routes serving the area.

27. Mr LAU Kong-wah also considered that in order to ensure the competitiveness of MOSR, its fare level must be lowered than that of franchised bus services.

28. In response, ACEO of KCRC said that rail and bus services each had their own advantages. Emphasizing the fast, reliable and convenient service to be provided by MOSR, he stressed that the Corporation would strive to ensure the competitiveness of MOSR in terms of both time and cost savings due to the passengers. In determining MOSR fares, the Corporation would take into account the fare level as well as journey time of existing franchised bus services. He further said that as MOSR gained its foothold in the market, the Administration should suitably ensure the co-ordination of public transport services in the area. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to maintain the viability of railway operation.

29. In reply to the Chairman, ACEO of KCRC said that a preliminary proposal on MOSR fares would hopefully be formulated by mid-2004 for consultation within the community.

30. DS for ETW said that both the Administration and KCRC were concerned about promoting the use of MOSR. Hence, the strengthening of feeder services to MOSR stations was a prominent feature of the proposed PT plan so as to ensure good connectivity of MOSR for easy access by passengers. Given the huge investment the community made in railway development, the Administration must also ensure that an efficient public transport network was maintained while safeguarding commuters' choice.

*Interchange at KCR Tai Wai Station*

31. Responding to members' concern about overcrowding at KCR Tai Wai Station, DS for ETW assured members that there would be adequate capacity to meet the additional demand generated from MOSR. SD/CP, KCRC supplemented that in order to cope with the passenger demand generated by MOSR, the interchange facilities at KCR Tai Wai Station had been re-designed in such a way so that passengers would be diverted to the front-end or back-end of the platform where train compartments had more spare capacity. Corresponding improvements to disperse the passengers had also been made in Kowloon Tong Station.



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*Noise impact*

32. Mr LAU Kong-wah was strongly of the view that taking into account the experience of WR in terms of noise mitigation, the Corporation should adopt additional containment measures including the provision of noise barriers along the railway alignment so as to minimize the significant noise impact to be created for the nearby sensitive noise receivers.

33. Mr Albert CHAN recalled that the Corporation was required to install additional noise barriers at various locations along WR alignment shortly before its opening so that the noise levels at such locations would comply with the prevailing statutory limits. He asked whether the same problem might arise for MOSR and whether the Corporation had conducted an overall review on the provision of noise containment measures along the MOSR alignment taking into account the experience of WR.

34. Acknowledging members' concern about the noise impact of MOSR, ACEO of KCRC said that the Corporation's priority was to ensure that the noise levels were kept within the statutory requirements. Taking into account the experience from WR, the Corporation would review the situation along MOSR's alignment to see what further improvements could be made, in particular the suppression of track noise by the application of additional noise absorption and containment measures. In this respect, the Corporation would closely liaise with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory limits. DS for ETW also said that the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau would review the situation together with the Corporation and EPD so as to ensure the adequacy of noise mitigation measures adopted for MOSR.

35. Mr Albert CHAN also referred to the situation at WR Long Ping Station where the residents living in lower floors of nearby buildings were seriously affected by loud echoing noises created by vehicles driving through the elevated station, and called on the Corporation to take extra care to avoid the recurrence of similar problem for MOSR stations. His view was noted by the Corporation.

**V Any other business**

36. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:20 pm.