

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1996/09-10
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Tuesday, 30 March 2010, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
- Member attending** : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- Members absent** : Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
- Public officers attending** : Agenda item IV
Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Miss Petty LAI
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing

Miss LUI Ying
Assistant Commissioner / Administration &
Licensing
Transport Department

Mr Honson YUEN
Chief Transport Officer / Driving Services
Transport Department

Agenda item V

Ms Eva CHENG, JP
Secretary for Transport & Housing

Ms Maisie CHENG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)

Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP
Director of Highways

Attendance by invitation : Agenda item IV

Quality Drivers Training Centre Ltd.

Mr CHENG Wui-yau
Chairman

Driving Instructors Association

Mr LAI Man-kit
Deputy Manager

Yau Kei Driving School Ltd.

Mr CHAN Chun-yeung
Manager

Articulated & Commercial Vehicles Instructors
Union

Mr WU Hing-shing
Chairman

HK & Kln Goods Vehicle, Omnibuses and
Minibuses Instructors' Association Ltd.

Mr WAI Shau-fun
President

三巴全體駕駛教師

Mr AU Wing-kan
Driver

Public and Private Commercial Driving Instructors'
Society

Mr MA Hing-chung
Chairman

Public and Private Light Buses Driving Instructors'
Society

Mr NG Wing-chiu
Executive Member

Hong Kong Driving Instruction Club

Mr MAK Kwan-chuen
Vice Chairman

Tak On Driving School Ltd.

Mr LAM Ping-tak
Manager

Hong Kong Society of Articulated Vehicle Driving
Instructors Ltd.

Mr MA Kwai-wah
Secretary

Hong Kong Commercial Vehicle Driving Instructors Association

Mr CHENG Cho-kwong
Chairman

Kowloon Motor Driving Instructors' Association Ltd.

Mr CHEUNG Tai-wai
Secretary

Driving Instructors Merchants Association Ltd.

Mr WONG Wai-lun
President

HK Motor Car Driving Instructor Association Ltd.

Mr LAM Muk-bing
Vice President

Lam Kui Driving School

Mr LAM Kui
Chairman

Lai Shui Yung Driving School

Mr LAI Shui-yung
Chairman

Motor Transport Workers General Union (Driving Instructors Branch)

Mr CHU Hoi-chuen
Member

Clerk in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Sarah YUEN
Senior Council Secretary (1)6

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant (1)5

Miss Angela LAM
Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

I Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1444/09-10 — Minutes of meeting on
22 January 2010)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2010 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1354/09-10(01) — Administration's paper on
the latest progress of Hong
Kong-Zhuhai-Macao
Bridge Main Bridge

LC Paper No. CB(1)1350/09-10(01) — Submission dated 10 March
2010 on the need to release
the traffic impact
assessment report in
connection with Hong
Kong Resorts' proposal to
allow taxis and buses into
Discovery Bay from a
member of the public

LC Paper No. CB(1)1350/09-10(02) — One of the many identical
submissions from members
of the public on the need to
improve Kennedy Road
before proceeding with the
construction of Hopewell
Centre II

LC Paper No. CB(1)1396/09-10(01) — Administration's paper on
road safety (Road Safety
Bulletin)

LC Paper No. CB(1)1410/09-10(01) — Referral from Legislative
Council Members'
meeting-cum-luncheon with
Tuen Mun District Council
members on 28 January
2010 regarding alignment
of Tuen Mun Western

- Bypass
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1421/09-10(01) — Submission on the cause of taxi and public light bus breakdowns linked to LPG fill-ups from Taxi & PLB Concern Group
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1421/09-10(02) — Submission on sectional fares for bus passengers from a member of the public
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1457/09-10(01) — Submission complaining about the imposition of restrictions on the boarding and alighting activities of private cars at the Shenzhen Bay control point from a member of the public
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1457/09-10(02) — Submission complaining about the danger of wet floors at the piers of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Holdings Limited from a member of the public)

2. Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 23 April 2010

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(02) — List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting on 23 April 2010 at 8:30 am –

- (a) Traffic and transport arrangements in South Lantau including Tung Chung Road;
- (b) Review on ferry services for outlying islands; and
- (c) Proposed fare increase by the MTR Corporation Limited.

4. As there would be three discussion items for the next meeting, members decided to extend the meeting to end at 11:30 am.

IV Private driving instructors' licences

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(03) — Administration's paper on private driving instructors' licences
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1452/09-10 — Background brief on private driving instructors' licences prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(07) — Submission from Hung Chun Driving School)

Presentation of views by deputations

5. At the Chairman's invitation, deputations attending the meeting took turns to express views on the following three preliminary options (the three options) on the issue of private driving instructors' licences (PDI licences) put forward by the Administration for consultation with the PDI trade –

- (a) Option A: to maintain the status quo;
- (b) Option B: to lift the benchmark for individual groups but maintain a benchmark for the overall number of PDI licences; and
- (c) Option C: to lift the benchmark for all PDI groups.

Quality Drivers Training Centre Ltd.

6. Mr CHENG Wui-yau briefed members on the Centre's views. In gist, the Centre considered that the existing mechanism for issuing PDI licences could ensure the quality of private driver training service as well as maintaining a reasonable supply of PDIs to meet demand for on-street driver training. As such, the Centre saw a need to preserve the status quo.

Driving Instructors Association

7. Mr LAI Man-kit said that the Association was of the view that the requirements for the issue of Group 1 PDI licences in terms of driving experience and the class of driving licence held should be tightened in future.

Yau Kei Driving School Ltd.

8. Mr CHAN Chun-yeung expressed the School's support for the merging of the three existing PDI groups into one (the "3 in 1" proposal), so that all existing holders of PDI licences, irrespective of the groups they belonged to,

would be allowed to give driving instructions to learner drivers of other groups, so long as they possessed the driving licences of the relevant vehicle classes.

Articulated & Commercial Vehicles Instructors Union

9. Mr WU Hing-shing stated that all members of the Union, who were mostly experienced Group 2 and Group 3 PDIs, supported the "3 in 1" proposal, and hoped that Group 2 and Group 3 PDIs could be allowed to give driving instructions to learner drivers of Group 1 vehicles.

HK & Kln Goods Vehicle, Omnibuses and Minibuses Instructors' Association Ltd.

10. Mr WAI Shau-fun said that the Association was of the view that anyone who met the relevant qualifications and requirements should be allowed to apply for PDI licences.

三巴全體駕駛教師

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(04))

11. Mr AU Wing-kan briefed members on the salient points of the above submission. In gist, bus driving instructors had for over five years been urging the Transport Department (TD) to allow bus driving instructors to obtain PDI licences in place of their Group 2 Restricted Driving Instructors' licences when they retired, so that they could make a living as PDIs thereafter. However, no progress had been made and it was hoped that the Panel could follow up in this regard.

Public and Private Commercial Driving Instructors' Society

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(05))

12. Mr MA Hing-chung briefed members on the following salient points of the Society's views as detailed in its submission –

- (a) The Society supported the "3 in 1" proposal because it could ensure fairness by enabling Group 2 and Group 3 PDIs to also give driving instructions to learner drivers of light goods vehicles, and could achieve an optimal balance between the supply and demand of PDIs; and
- (b) It was disappointing that the Administration had yet to, as proposed in 2000, provide off-street practice sites for PDIs. Active efforts should be made to expedite the progress in this regard.

Public and Private Light Buses Driving Instructors' Society

13. Mr NG Wing-chiu indicated the Society's support for implementation of the "3 in 1" proposal to properly recognize the experience of existing PDIs, and urged TD to take forward the proposal as soon as practicable.

Hong Kong Driving Instruction Club

14. Mr MAK Kwan-chuen said that the Club considered it agreeable to maintain the status quo.

Tak On Driving School Ltd.

15. Mr LAM Ping-tak urged TD to enhance the standard of PDIs and expressed support for the "3 in 1" proposal.

Hong Kong Society of Articulated Vehicle Driving Instructors Ltd.

16. Mr MA Kwai-wah expressed support for the "3 in 1" proposal to enable Group 2 and Group 3 PDIs to give driving instructions to learner drivers of Group 1 vehicles. He further pointed out that it was undesirable that when the 347 new Group 1 PDI licences were open for application in mid-July 2009, the order in which the some 24 000 applications were dealt with was determined by lot. The result would be that even experienced PDIs in Groups 2 and 3 had to vie with the general public for the new PDI licences, and they might have to wait a long time before they could obtain the licences. To ensure fairness, these experienced PDIs should be given priority in applying for the new licences.

*Hong Kong Commercial Vehicle Driving Instructors Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(06))*

17. Mr CHENG Cho-kwong briefed members on the Association's submission and made the following points –

- (a) If existing PDIs were allowed to apply for the PDI licences of other groups, the Association would support Option B to lift the benchmark for individual groups but maintain a benchmark for the overall number of PDI licences;
- (b) It was undesirable that the Commissioner for Transport (C for T) had decided to issue a total of 460 new PDI licences before consulting the PDI trade on the three options. Issue of new PDI licences should be withheld pending agreement on the way forward in consultation with the trade; and
- (c) It was disappointing that despite calls for implementation of the "3 in 1" proposal for five years, the Administration was still

reluctant to pursue it quoting various unconvincing excuses.

Kowloon Motor Driving Instructors' Association Ltd.
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1497/09-10(01))

18. Mr CHEUNG Tai-wai briefed members on the following salient points of the Association's views as detailed in its submission –

- (a) Considering the decreasing demand in the past ten years for driving instructions on Group 1 vehicles and the resultant imbalance in supply and demand, no more new Group 1 PDI licences should be issued in the following four years;
- (b) The Association was opposed to the "3 in 1" proposal because the driving experience and the needs of the learner drivers of different groups of vehicles were very different;
- (c) The status quo should be maintained because the existing three PDI groups and their respective benchmarks had been thoroughly discussed and agreed upon by the trade in 1999; and
- (d) The Association had yet to examine the impacts of and formulate its stance regarding the recent proposal to allow experienced PDIs of one group to apply for PDI licences of other groups.

Driving Instructors Merchants Association Ltd.

19. Mr WONG Wai-lun said that he shared the views of Kowloon Motor Driving Instructors' Association Ltd. in paragraph 18 above.

HK Motor Car Driving Instructor Association Ltd.

20. Mr LAM Muk-bing preferred the status quo and did not support the "3 in 1" proposal.

Lam Kui Driving School

21. Mr LAM Kui pointed out that if the learner drivers receiving driving instruction from Group 3 PDIs were allowed to drive all groups of vehicles after passing the relevant written and road tests, it was unfair not to allow Group 3 PDIs to give driving instruction to learner drivers of other groups of vehicles. He therefore indicated support for the 3 in 1 proposal.

Lai Shui Yung Driving School

22. Mr LAI Shui-yung shared the views of Mr MA Kwai-wah, Secretary of the Hong Kong Society of Articulated Vehicle Driving Instructors Ltd., in paragraph 16 above.

Motor Transport Workers General Union (Driving Instructors Branch)

23. Mr CHU Hoi-chuen expressed the following views of the Branch –

- (a) After the 347 new Group 1 PDI licences opened for application in mid-July 2009 were all issued, no more new Group 1 PDI licences should be issued in the following four years;
- (b) The Branch was opposed to the "3 in 1" proposal; and
- (c) The Branch hoped that the existing three PDI groups and their respective benchmarks could be preserved.

24. The Chairman and members thanked the deputations for attending the meeting to express their views. Members noted that Hung Chu Driving School, which did not send any representative to the meeting, had provided a submission (LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(07)) for members' reference.

The Administration's initial response to the deputations' concerns

25. The Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH) elaborated on the review findings on the grouping of PDIs and made the following points –

- (a) The mechanism to issue new PDI licences had been laid down in the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations (Cap. 374B) (the Regulations). As such, pending agreement upon revision of the mechanism and introduction of the relevant changes through amendments to the Regulations, the Administration had to, as required under the Regulations, issue new PDI licences according to the outcomes of the biennial review of the need to issue new PDI licences; and
- (b) The views of deputations and members as well as public views would be taken into consideration when deciding on the way forward regarding the issue of PDI licences.

26. At Mr WONG Kwok-hing's request, USTH and the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Administration & Licensing (AC for T/A&L) also made the following points in response to specific views of the deputations –

- (a) Regarding the strong request from "三巴全體駕駛教師" (paragraph 11) to allow bus driving instructors to obtain PDI

licences after retirement, and Mr MA Hing-chung's call in paragraph 12(a) above to allow Group 2 and Group 3 PDIs to give driving instructions to learner drivers of light goods vehicles, it should be noted that C for T did not have the authority to directly issue new PDI licences to any group of driving instructors. When reviewing the need to issue new PDI licences, C for T was required to take into account the prevailing traffic conditions, the policy adopted for driver training and the demand of learner drivers to receive driving instructions from PDIs in respect of that group of motor vehicles. Moreover, according to the Regulations, even if the need to issue new PDI licences was established, C for T should still invite the public to apply for the new licences by a notice published in newspapers, and the order in which all eligible applications for the new licences were to be dealt with should be determined by lot. As such, any person who wished to obtain the PDI licence of a certain group should apply for it when new PDI licences of that group were being issued, and attend the relevant written and road tests; and

- (b) As to Mr MA Hing-chung's concern in paragraph 12(b) above about the progress in the provision of off-street practice sites for PDIs, it had been the policy intention that any application from the trade that met the following three criteria would be considered: availability of suitable sites; undertaking by the PDI organizations concerned to manage the sites themselves; and payment of market rents. Most important of all, the PDI organizations had to identify the sites themselves.

Discussion

Comments on the three options

27. Mr IP Wai-ming opined that instead of simply highlighting the three options for consideration, the Administration should analyze and set out the benefits and impacts of each of the options to facilitate consideration. USTH responded that the benefits and impacts had in fact been highlighted in the Administration's paper. The three options had just been put forward as preliminary proposals to ascertain the trade's and the public's preference for further examination. The Administration had no intention to decide on the way forward with haste.

28. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired how the Administration intended to weigh the aspirations of the PDI trade for maintaining a benchmark for the overall number of PDI licences against those of the public for opening up the market and lifting the benchmark for all PDI groups as proposed in Option C. In

particular, he asked whether the Administration had analyzed Option C's impacts and benefits, and how support for it could be secured from the trade. USTH responded that the Administration would further examine this option in consultation with the trade and any views received from the public.

29. Ms Miriam LAU pointed out that since PDI licences were issued for on-street driver training, it might be undesirable to lift the benchmark for all PDI groups considering the resultant traffic impacts on the communities concerned. As such, Option C was not preferred by most PDIs because it would affect not only the trade's interests but also public interests. Moreover, in recognition of public demand, the Administration had already relaxed the benchmarks of PDI licences in 1999. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung shared Ms LAU's view on the need to note public interests in deciding on which of the three options to take forward.

30. Ms Miriam LAU opined that Option B, which was similar to the "3 in 1" proposal, might be preferable because under this option existing PDIs could apply for PDI licences of other groups at anytime instead of being subject to the result of the drawing of lots. She therefore urged the trade to focus on taking Option B forward. USTH echoed her observations, and said that the Administration was willing to further discuss Option B with the trade if it could achieve a consensus on it.

31. Pointing out that support from the trade was essential, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung urged the Administration to actively address their concerns, and to provide them with more details on the three options, so as to facilitate agreement to be reached on the option to take forward. USTH responded that taking into account the views of the deputations and members, it appeared that Option B was preferred for further exploration with the trade and more details would be provided on the option.

The "3 in 1" proposal

32. Mr WONG Kwok-hing reckoned that some members of the PDI trade might have opposed to the "3 in 1" proposal out of concern about the proposal's impact on the structure of the trade and the livelihood of individual PDIs. In response to his request for an estimate in this regard, USTH pointed out that the market demand had been shrinking over the past ten years as evidenced by the decrease in the number of driving test forms sold by 37% from 99 000 in 1999 to 62 000 in 2009. The Administration, however, had been closely monitoring the situation, and thorough consultation with stakeholders would be conducted before changes that might affect the market were contemplated.

33. While sharing the view that the number of PDIs should be contained, Ms Miriam LAU indicated support for the "3 in 1" proposal to enhance

flexibility in response to the following challenges presently faced by the PDI trade –

- (a) The decreasing demand for driving instructions;
- (b) The aging profile of PDIs vis-à-vis the need to contain the number of new PDI licences issued in light of the shrinking market; and
- (c) The demands for driving instructions in respect of different PDI groups were different. Hence, it would be undesirable to restrict PDIs of a certain group from providing instructions to learner drivers of other groups.

34. Ms Miriam LAU further pointed out that the overseas practices in respect of qualification requirements for PDIs quoted in Annex II to the Administration's paper to support the Administration's decision not to pursue the "3 in 1" proposal was irrelevant because none of the jurisdictions studied had a benchmark or quota for PDI licences and as such, the PDIs of these countries could obtain a PDI licence of every vehicle class if they passed the relevant tests. She urged the Administration to be similarly flexible and to obtain further details on the grouping of PDI licences in these countries for reference. USTH responded that views on the "3 in 1" proposal were welcome, in particular on how to fairly recognize the experience of existing PDIs when new PDI licences were issued. Since Option B might similarly serve the above purpose, it might be taken forward if supported.

35. Noting the diverse views of the deputations, Mr Ronny TONG called for greater efforts from the Administration to negotiate for changes to the structure of the PDI trade, and expressed support for the "3 in 1" proposal for its effect in enhancing market transparency to prevent monopoly. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung also pointed out that there was general support for the proposal because of its flexibility and being able to utilize the experience of existing PDIs. In Mr LEUNG's view, to secure support for the "3 in 1" proposal from deputations presently opposing to it, the Administration should provide an analysis of the impacts of this proposal.

36. USTH responded that should a majority view be achieved on any of the three options, the Administration would further analyze the option concerned to help work out the relevant implementation details. Members' and deputations' views expressed at this meeting would also be taken into account when the Administration worked out the way forward.

37. Mr KAM Nai-wai noted that as explained in paragraph 18 of the Administration's paper for this item (LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(03)), the adoption of the "3 in 1" proposal might entail a higher threshold for entry into

the PDI market because new entrants of the PDI trade would then be required to possess driving licences of all vehicle classes under the existing three PDI groups. He enquired whether the requirement, if imposed, would help enhance the standard of PDIs and in turn benefit learner drivers.

38. USTH replied in the affirmative but pointed out that the above suggested requirement was only a suggestion made by certain PDIs. As such, although the policy objective was to enhance the standard of PDIs, whether to introduce the suggested requirement would need to be agreed upon in consultation with the trade. Noting the response, the Deputy Chairman pointed out that few overseas countries required new entrants of the PDI trade to possess driving licences of all vehicle classes under the existing PDI groups because specialization of skill was also important. The Administration noted his view.

Issue of new PDI licences

39. Ms Miriam LAU noted that of the 1 041 applicants invited to attend the written test for the issue of new PDI licences in mid-March 2010, only 71 applicants had passed both written and road tests and been issued with PDI licences. In response to her on the reasons, AC for T/A&L explained that it would take time for arrangements to be made for all the 1 041 applicants to attend the road test progressively in accordance with their priorities as determined by lot. It was estimated that the whole exercise of issuing the new PDI licences would be completed by late 2010 or early 2011.

40. Mr Ronny TONG questioned the need to impose restrictions on the number of entrants to the PDI market, which in his view would only keep fees high to the detriment of learner drivers. While recognizing the call from learner drivers to issue more PDI licences to enhance competition in the driver training market to keep fees low, USTH stressed the need to open up the market in a progressive manner with care, in recognition that supply of PDIs already exceeded demand of learner drivers to receive driving instructions from PDIs. As a start, the Administration would relax the restrictions on C for T to issue new PDI licences to experienced PDIs. Mr IP Wai-ming agreed that care should be exercised in determining whether to issue new PDI licences, pointing out that the problem with the driver training market was that supply was greater than demand, in particular where Group 2 and Group 3 vehicles were concerned because the employment opportunities and incomes of the professional drivers concerned were on the decrease.

41. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired how the current benchmarks for PDI licences used for regulating the supply of PDIs were determined, and whether they could reflect the market situation. USTH responded that it was agreed with the trade in 1999 that the number of valid PDI licences prevailing at the

time for the three groups of PDIs (1 050 for Group 1, 130 for Group 2 and 230 for Group 3) would be used as benchmarks to maintain a balance in the market.

Driving schools

42. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung highlighted complaints that the Government was prejudicing against PDIs in favour of the HK School of Motoring, and urged the Administration to explore how to prevent monopoly by the latter. USTH denied that there was any monopoly in the market that might affect learner drivers' choice, and pointed out that if the market was not opened up gradually in an orderly manner, PDIs' livelihood might be adversely affected. Hence many trade members suggested that a benchmark for the overall number of PDI licences should be maintained.

43. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that most driver learners preferred quality service at low price available only at big set-ups like the HK School of Motoring through economy of scale. Moreover, in a small place like Hong Kong, the demand for driver training might not be great enough to sustain a "two-pronged approach" driver training policy of promoting off-street driver training through the establishment of driving schools and maintaining a sufficient supply of PDIs for on-street driver training. As such, to avoid monopoly by driving schools and to make good use of the experience of existing PDIs, the Administration should review not only the issue of PDI licences but also the overall driver training policy.

44. USTH responded that there was no monopoly by driving schools as there were already four driving schools in Hong Kong, and that more could be opened if there were interested parties. In fact, there were over 1 000 private driving instructors in Hong Kong but only some 340 restricted driving instructors working in driving schools. The Deputy Chairman, however, pointed out that driving schools could not be opened easily because of the difficulty in securing land for the purpose. He considered it necessary for the Administration to clearly explain its policy on driving schools to PDIs to enable them to ascertain the market situation and in turn their career prospect.

V Proposed retention of one supernumerary Principal Government Engineer post and one supernumerary Chief Engineer post; and extension of redeployment of one Chief Engineer post in the Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Project Management Office of Highways Department

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1451/09-10(08) — Administration's paper on proposed retention of two supernumerary posts and extension of redeployment of one permanent post in

the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Project Management Office of Highways Department)

45. The Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH) briefed members on the proposal (the Proposal) to retain two supernumerary posts (one Principal Government Engineer (PGE) (D3) and one Chief Engineer (CE) (D1)) and to extend the redeployment of one permanent CE post in the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Project Management Office (HKPMO) of the Highways Department (HyD) to sustain the implementation of the HZMB and related highway infrastructure projects.

46. Highlighting the benefits which HZMB could bring, Ir Dr Raymond HO urged members to support the project to avoid delay in its delivery. He also indicated support for the Proposal, and considered it reasonable that instead of retaining the above three posts (one PGE and two CEs) in HZMB HKPMO until 2016 to tie in with the delivery of the HZMB Main Bridge, the Administration had proposed to retain the posts for only four years until 30 June 2014, so that the latest progress of the projects concerned and the overall staffing situation in HyD could be taken into account in the second half of 2013 to facilitate review and determination of the continued need for these posts. STH said that the above approach could ensure that the proposed extension was truly justified.

47. Mr WONG Kwok-hing also indicated support for the Proposal and early commencement of the relevant works, and enquired about the progress of the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (TM-CLKL) and the Tuen Mun Western Bypass (TMWB) projects. The Director of Highways (D of Hy) responded that with the relevant Investigation and Preliminary Design Studies already in progress, it was aimed that the two highway projects could complete at more or less the same time as the HZMB Main Bridge. He further reported that the alignment of TM-CLKL had already been finalized and hopefully its construction could commence in 2011 or 2012. As regards TMWB, HyD was actively considering ten alignment options taking into account comments received from local residents, relevant District Councils as well as Rural Committees and Heung Yee Kuk, with a view to further consulting the local community on the shortlisted options shortly, so that detailed design of TMWB could be conducted early to enable its construction to commence at more or less the same time as TM-CLKL. Mr WONG was glad to note the plan to tie in the completion of the two highway projects with the commissioning of the HZMB Main Bridge to provide a direct route between North West New Territories (NWNT) and Lantau.

Justifications for the posts concerned

48. While expressing support for the Proposal, Ms Miriam LAU enquired about the division of work among the three CEs in HZMB HKPMO, namely, CE/HZMB HK, CE/NWNT and CE/Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF). D of Hy responded that the three CEs were respectively responsible for the following projects –

- (a) CE/HZMB HK (the supernumerary CE post seeking extension under the Proposal) was responsible for the HZMB Main Bridge within the Mainland waters to be jointly funded by the three governments concerned, and the Hong Kong Link Road (HKLR), which would be the part of the HZMB in Hong Kong waters linking the HZMB Main Bridge to HKBCF;
- (b) CE/NWNT (the redeployed permanent CE post seeking extension of the redeployment under the Proposal) was responsible for TM-CLKL, TMWB and planning for the highway infrastructure for NWNT; and
- (c) CE/HKBCF was responsible for HKBCF, which would be a multi-modal transportation hub integrating passenger and cargo facilities, and linking HKLR and the Hong Kong International Airport.

49. In response to Ms Miriam LAU's query about whether HKBCF alone could entail sufficient work for CE/HKBCF, D of Hy explained that HKBCF was in fact a complicated large-scale project to be implemented on an artificial island of about 130 hectares in size. Costing some \$15 to 20 billion to build, it would accommodate various facilities and buildings required for its operation.

50. While appreciating the complexity of the HZMB project and hence the likely need for the three posts under the Proposal, the Deputy Chairman said that to ensure proper use of public resources, Members belonging to the Democratic Party would carefully ensure that every proposal for retention or extension of supernumerary post was justified. As such, to help Members decide whether to support the Proposal, he considered it necessary for the Administration to provide before the relevant Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) meeting the following –

- (a) Information on the role of the Project Manager/HZMB (PM/HZMB) (the supernumerary PGE post seeking extension under the Proposal) in the Joint Works Committee to be set up by the three governments for supervising the HZMB Authority to be set up in the Mainland for taking forward the HZMB Main Bridge; and the staff involved in supporting PM/HZMB to perform the above role, particularly the proportion of engineers

involved; and

- (b) Details on how CE/HZMB HK planned to ensure effective and thorough consultation with stakeholders in taking forward the HZMB project, in particular the environmental concern groups and community groups to be consulted.

51. STH and D of Hy agreed to supplement the above details in the relevant ESC paper and made the following points –

- (a) STH and D of Hy would sit on the Joint Works Committee, which would be a higher-level supervisory committee similar to the HZMB Advance Work Co-ordination Group. PM/HZMB would play a very important role in steering and supervising the work of the HZMB Authority through regular meetings with its key staff and in providing technical support and expert advice to STH and D of Hy in the Joint Works Committee; and
- (b) Comprehensive public consultation would be conducted when taking forward Government projects. In fact, for the past two to three years, HyD had been conducting public engagement exercises as far as possible when taking forward large-scale projects. As such, CE/HZMB HK would continue to consult Tung Chung residents and environmental concern groups when taking forward the HZMB Main Bridge and HKLR. The other two CEs in HZMB HKPMO would also conduct public consultation exercises on their respective project(s) to allow for early identification of local concerns, so that the public's views could be properly taken into account at both the preliminary and the detailed design stages of the projects. In fact, the location of HKBCF was finalized only after detailed discussion with green groups and experts on the preservation of Chinese White Dolphins.

52. Summing up, the Chairman advised that the Proposal would be submitted to ESC for consideration at its meeting on 28 April 2010 and, if endorsed, to the Finance Committee on 14 May 2010 for approval.

VI Any other business

53. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:25 am.