

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2518/10-11
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Monday, 28 March 2011, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Members absent** : Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH

Public officers attending : Agenda item IV

Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Miss Erica NG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport) 2

Miss Cinderella LAW
Assistant Commissioner / Administration & Licensing
Transport Department

Mr Walter FOO
Senior Engineer / Vehicle Regulations & Standards
Transport Department

Agenda item V

Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mrs Apollonia LIU LEE Ho-kei
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport) 5

Mr. Peter LAU Ka-keung
Director of Highways

Mr. Daniel CHUNG Kum-wah
Deputy Project Manager / Major Works (2)
Highways Department

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Sarah YUEN
Senior Council Secretary (1)2

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

I Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1539/10-11 - Minutes of meeting on 28 January 2011)

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2011 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1466/10-11(01) - Submission on the frequency of bus route 601P from a member of the public

LC Paper No. CB(1)1466/10-11(02) - Correspondence between a member of the public and the Administration regarding the Central Kowloon Route

LC Paper No. CB(1)1493/10-11(01) Memo referring to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Kwun Tong District Council members at their meeting-cum-luncheon with LegCo Members on 13 May 2010 about the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems in Kwun Tong

LC Paper No. CB(1)1586/10-11(01) - Administration's response to the complaint from a member of the public about the absence of bus stop announcement systems and bus route maps on buses of Citybus Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited, which was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1294/10-11(03) dated 18 February 2011

LC Paper No. CB(1)1586/10-11(02) - Submission on the efforts made by the Government to

- LC Paper No. CB(1)1586/10-11(03) - minimize traffic accidents from a member of the public
Submission on the fuels used by taxis from Taxi & P.L.B. Concern Group
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1624/10-11(01) Administration's response to issues raised by Kwun Tong District Council members at their meeting-cum-luncheon with LegCo Members on 13 May 2010 about the transport problems in Choi Ying Estate and Choi Fook Estate)

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

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 29 April 2011

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. Members noted the letter dated 25 March 2011 from Mr WONG Kwok-hing requesting the Panel to discuss "Adjustment to MTR fares and request for review of the MTR Corporation Limited's Fare Adjustment Mechanism", which was tabled at the meeting. After discussion, members agreed to discuss Mr WONG's proposed item as well as the following items at the Panel's April regular meeting –

- (a) Installation of radio rebroadcasting system for digital audio broadcasting at 11 Government road tunnels; and
- (b) Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme in Yuen Long Town.

4. Members also discussed the need to advance the Panel's April regular meeting originally scheduled for 29 April 2011 to facilitate attendance of the meeting by members joining the overseas duty visit of the Subcommittee on Harbourfront Planning during the period from 24 April to 2 May 2011. In consideration of Mr Jeffrey LAM's reservation about advancement of the April meeting, the Chairman instructed that more than one meeting slot for advancing the meeting should be identified for members' selection to facilitate

their attendance.

(Post-meeting note: The Panel's April regular meeting was subsequently rescheduled to 15 April 2011. At the instruction of the Chairman and with the consent of the Administration, the item in paragraph 3(a) above was deferred to a future meeting to allow more time for discussion on the MTR fare adjustment and the Fare Adjustment Mechanism.)

IV Regulation of motorcycles

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(03) - Administration's paper on regulation of motorcycles

LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(04) - Letter dated 26 February 2010 from Hon WONG Kwok-hing

LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(05) - Relevant press cuttings)

5. The Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH) and the Assistant Commissioner/Administration & Licensing, Transport Department (AC for T/A&L) together briefed members on the Administration's paper for this item (LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(03)), which gave an account of the Administration's review of the construction of storage boxes on motorcycles (MCs), and advised members of a set of guidelines planned (the planned guidelines) to be issued by the Transport Department (TD) to give advice on the installation of these storage boxes.

General comments on the planned guidelines

6. Ms LI Fung-ying opined that the planned guidelines had failed to address the important fact that the storage boxes on delivery MCs were installed by the employers rather than the drivers employed to deliver the food or cargoes, and as such the latter had little say in ensuring the storage boxes and cargo loads were properly mounted. She also expressed regrets that the guidelines would not have any legislative effect. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung echoed her point on the employers' role in ensuring MC storage boxes were properly constructed and used, while Mr Tommy CHEUNG pointed out that employers were in fact concerned about the safety of employees delivering food or goods for them.

7. AC for T/A&L responded that the Administration had already exchanged views with relevant operators, who provided the MC fleet, to ensure the guidelines were applicable and acceptable. The guidelines could also serve as good reference on driving with loads and placement of loads for

individual MC owners as well as MC drivers.

8. Mr Tommy CHEUNG indicated support for the planned guidelines the compliance with which would be supported by the catering trade because they had been involved in formulating the guidelines. He however pointed out that the trade had not been provided with the finalized guidelines and urged the Administration to follow up. He also sought clarifications on the following points in the finalized guidelines –

- (a) The definition of " without sharp protrusions"; and
- (b) The reasons for specifying that the one or two horizontal reflective strip(s) to be affixed at the rear of the storage box to enhance conspicuity should be red, and whether other colours in keeping with the logos of the operators concerned could be used.

9. AC for T/A&L responded that storage boxes with smooth edges should be installed to minimize the damage that could be caused by sharp protrusions. She further explained that according to the relevant legislation, reflectors should be red in colour. Moreover, the trade had not indicated any difficulty in using red reflective strips when they were consulted. Notwithstanding, the Administration would further consult the trade and the Police on this requirement and review it where necessary.

10. Miss Tanya CHAN referred to Annex 2 to the Administration's paper for this item (LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(03)), which provided a table on overseas control of storage boxes, and enquired whether as in some overseas jurisdictions, the planned guidelines would also impose height restrictions on the load carried, recommend "soft" construction of the storage box, and give recommendations on the design of the storage box. AC for T/A&L responded that as gathered from overseas experience and vehicle owner's manuals, it was not possible to generalize relevant advices into universally applicable guidelines on load size or load limits because the manufacturers' advices on load limits varied between MC models due to differences in design. As such, no specific height restrictions on the load would be imposed. However, where necessary improvements to the guidelines could be introduced after their implementation.

Effect of the planned guidelines vis-à-vis existing legislation

11. Pointing out that prosecutions in relation to storage boxes of MCs had been instituted from time to time in the past, Mr Tommy CHEUNG enquired

whether after the planned guidelines were issued, prosecution would only be instituted against MCs that could not comply with the guidelines. AC for T/A&L responded that it was appropriate for the planned guidelines to be issued for compliance first, and legislation in this regard would only be contemplated later. She further explained that prosecutions against MCs could be instituted for reasons other than those related to their storage boxes.

12. In response to Ms Miriam LAU, AC for T/A&L explained that there were no specific construction requirements for MC storage box in existing legislation. However, all motor vehicles, including MCs, were subject to control under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374), and their construction and maintenance requirements were specified in the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap 374A) as follows -

- (a) That motor vehicles should be soundly and properly constructed of suitable materials (Regulation 5(1) of Cap 374A);
- (b) That the maximum gross vehicle weight for a motorcycle (i.e. 500kg) should not be exceeded (Regulation 7(1) of Cap 374A); and
- (c) That the overhang should not exceed 60% of the length between the centres of the front and rear wheels (Regulation 8 of Cap 374A).

Admin 13. At Ms LAU's request, AC for T/A&L agreed to provide figures on enforcement actions, if any, taken over the past three years against MCs that had contravened the above three provisions. Miss Tanya CHAN added that the Administration should also supplement information on the coverage of the above provisions, and on whether the driver or the owner would be held responsible in the event of contravention. AC for T/A&L responded that the party that would be held responsible would hinge on the circumstances of the relevant case.

Views and concerns about how to ensure compliance with the planned guidelines

14. The Deputy Chairman highlighted the need to issue the planned guidelines to strengthen regulation of MCs because there was public concern about MC safety, and because storage boxes on MCs were usually locally fabricated and fitted to suit the users' needs as aftermarket modifications. In response to his question on who would enforce the planned guidelines and

how compliance with them would be monitored, AC for T/A&L advised that the guidelines aimed to draw the relevant trades' attention to the points to note when installing MC storage boxes. Considering their positive response to the guidelines, the Administration was confident that the guidelines could bring about improvements. If, however, there were serious cases of non-compliance, the Administration would review how to better ensure compliance.

15. Noting the above response, Mr Jeffrey LAM highlighted the increase in the use of MCs for food delivery and hence the need to properly regulate the size and use of MC storage boxes to minimize MC accidents, and enquired whether the Administration would conduct inspections to ensure compliance with the planned guidelines, such as by paying visits to large MC fleet owners to conduct measurement of the MC storage boxes concerned.

16. AC for T/A&L responded that since loads might affect stability and handling of MCs, the planned guidelines had already clearly specified that MC drivers should always consult the manufacturer's instructions given in the owner's manual or other documents issued by the manufacturer to make sure that the size, positioning and load capacity of the MC storage box were compatible with the original designs of the MCs concerned. The Administration would also gauge the trade's feedback on the guidelines, and actively monitor the compliance situation. Should non-compliance be identified during MC inspections, the owners concerned would be reminded to comply with the guidelines.

17. Highlighting the seriousness of MC accidents, in particular those that involved food delivery MCs due to the need to meet performance pledges, Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered the above approach of implementing the planned guidelines insufficient to ensure MC safety, and opined that the Administration should instead inspect all MCs immediately, followed by regular inspections.

18. USTH responded that according to TD's statistics, on average only around 4% MC accidents that occurred during the period from 2007 to 2010 involved vehicle contributory factors. AC for T/A&L confirmed his point, adding that this percentage had in fact progressively dropped, culminating in a decrease of over 50% during the period. She further advised that the planned guidelines had in fact been worked out in consultation with the trade, including major food delivery operators, and that they had all indicated support in following the planned guidelines. Notwithstanding, the Administration would review the effectiveness of the guidelines and the way forward in due course. She further assured members that the Administration

was aware of the importance of MC safety. As such, although only two of the nine overseas jurisdictions reviewed had issued guidelines or codes of practice about the construction and usage of MC storage boxes, the Administration had still planned to issue guidelines to enhance the trade's safety awareness.

19. Mr Ronny TONG pointed out that the conditions for insurance taken out for MCs for commercial use might be more stringent, so that there might not be compensation for the injured if the load carried by the MC concerned did not comply with the relevant provisions. Owing to the gravity of the above consequence, there was a need for TD to conduct inspections to ensure commercial MCs' compliance with the planned guidelines, and to impose more stringent requirements on MCs for commercial use. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared his views, and opined that inspections should at least be conducted on the MC fleets of major operators.

20. AC for T/A&L responded that no differentiation between private and commercial use had been made in relation to MCs. In fact, all vehicles, whether private or commercial, had to ensure that the loads they carried were mounted securely. There were also provisions governing the weight and distribution of the loads to ensure safety. As long as MCs were used according to the relevant provisions, there should not be any problem with insurance cover. The Chairman, however, urged the Administration to note members' strong views on the need for TD to conduct inspections to ensure compliance with the planned guidelines.

21. While agreeing that unless non-compliance was serious, there might not be a need to introduce specific legislative control for MC storage boxes, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed concern that with more and more delivery services outsourced to individuals on a self-employed basis to minimize staff costs, these individual contractors might tend to speed to make more trips for more incomes. As such, there might be a need to address this problem in consultation with the Labour and Welfare Bureau. The Administration noted his views.

Causes of motorcycle accidents

22. Ms LI Fung-ying expressed regrets about the absence of statistics on MC accidents that involved storage boxes to shed light on whether MCs with storage boxes were accident-prone. In her view, the Administration should in future keep the above statistics, and seek the views of the employees of the relevant trades on possible causes of MC accidents, in particular whether storage boxes were the cause and if so, the problems involved and how

improvements could be made. Miss Tanya CHAN shared her view on the need to consult staff of the relevant trades.

23. AC for T/A&L responded that the Administration would gladly consider any views from employees, and would follow up with both drivers and operators on improvements that should be made accordingly. As to accident statistics, she agreed to follow up with the Police to explore the keeping of future statistics on accidents involving MCs with storage boxes.

24. Ms Miriam LAU stressed the need to identify the causes of traffic accidents to ensure road safety. In response to her on causes of MC accidents, AC for T/A&L confirmed that accidents involving storage boxes of MCs, if any, would be included in the 76 accidents involving vehicle contributory factors presented in Annex 1 to LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(03). However, according to the Police, none of the above 76 accidents was related to the storage box, and that contrary to relevant press reports, MCs carrying storage boxes had not been identified as an issue. Ms LAU pointed out that according to her observation, MC accidents mostly involved actions of the driver, in particular speeding and other reckless driving behaviours. She enquired whether measures could be taken to enhance MC drivers' safety awareness.

25. In response, AC for T/A&L reported that publicity activities on driving behaviours had been organized in co-operation with the Road Safety Council. Efforts in this regard would continue to address causes of traffic accidents identified.

Members' proposals on how to ensure motorcycle safety

26. Mr WONG Kwok-hing highlighted the safety and stability of motorcycles with side-cars used in the old days to sell ice-creams, and urged TD to actively promote use of such MCs for delivery purposes. AC for T/A&L responded that the Administration was open-minded in this regard, and would actively consider any proposal on the construction aspects of MCs.

27. Mr Tommy CHEUNG, however, recalled that prosecutions had in the past been instituted against MCs carrying storage boxes, and asked the Administration to provide figures in this regard for the past three years, with details of the provision(s) on the basis of which the above prosecutions had been instituted, so as to assure the trade that they would not be prosecuted if they complied with the planned guidelines in converting their MCs. AC for T/A&L agreed to provide the required details after the meeting.

28. The Deputy Chairman noted that MCs fitted with storage boxes could be used for food delivery, and for providing courier service or maintenance service. The roads used by MCs would thus vary with the above differences in usage. For example, food delivery MCs were mainly used for short trips within the same district, whereas maintenance MCs might go all over the territory to provide service using expressways. He therefore proposed that to enhance MC safety, control on road use by MCs should be tightened.

29. AC for T/A&L responded that the Administration had all along attached great importance to MC safety, and had already introduced a probationary driving licence scheme for inexperienced drivers of MCs and motor tricycles in 2000. During the 12-month probationary period, an inexperienced MC and motor tricycle driver was required to display a "P" plate at the front and rear of the MC or tricycle and subject to various restrictions, including prohibition from carrying any passenger, driving at a speed of more than 70 kilometres an hour (km/h), and driving on the offside lane of an expressway. In 2002, MCs and tricycles were further required to keep all obligatory front lamps, obligatory headlamps and obligatory rear lamps lighted at all times while driving. Furthermore, Chapter 7 of the Road Users' Code was devoted to MCs alerting MC drivers to safety matters such as protection gear, positioning on the road, points to note when overtaking, etc.

V Structural safety of Hing Fat Street Slip Road to Island Eastern Corridor

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(06) - Administration's paper on structural safety of Hing Fat Street Slip Road to Island Eastern Corridor

LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(07) - Relevant press cuttings

LC Paper No. CB(1)1739/10-11(01) Powerpoint presentation materials provided by the Administration)

30. With the aid of power-point, the Director of Highways (D of Hy) and the Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (2), Highways Department (HyD) briefed members on the Administration's paper for this item (LC Paper No. CB(1)1662/10-11(06)), which sought to explain the structural safety condition of the Hing Fat Street Slip Road (the Slip Road) of the Island Eastern Corridor (IEC), the incident of the Central-Wanchai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link project (the CWB project) allegedly affecting the structure of the Slip Road (the Incident), and the follow-up actions taken by the Administration in respect of the Incident.

31. USTH added that the Administration attached great importance to the safety of road bridges including IEC. As such, a monitoring mechanism on the impacts of the CWB project on the bridge structures of IEC had long been established. He further clarified that the works that had affected IEC were not major works of the CWB project but works conducted to convert part of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)'s existing Whitfield Depot into an underground car park for use by FEHD to release space for construction of CWB (the reprovisioning works). Moreover, the part of IEC affected was not its trunk road but only one of its slip roads. Relevant experts had already confirmed the safety of IEC. This notwithstanding, to ensure public safety, HyD would continue to closely monitor the impacts of the CWB project on IEC and other nearby structures according to the established monitoring mechanism.

32. Noting the above report, Mr WONG Kwok-hing urged the Administration to keep up its efforts to ensure the safety of IEC, considering that it was a major trunk road along the northern shore of the Hong Kong Island and, with a daily traffic of over 150 000 vehicles, was only next in importance to King's Road. Mr Jeffrey LAM, however, reckoned that the Administration had already taken measures to ensure public safety because, as explained in HyD's briefing, additional stabilization measures for the bridge foundation of the Slip Road and adjacent structures had already been implemented in recognition that the risk of the construction works of CWB was higher than originally anticipated.

The incident detection and reporting mechanism

33. While pointing out that as learnt from relevant professionals, the Incident was not very serious, and that remedial measures had already been taken, Miss Tanya CHAN was keen to ascertain how the Incident had been detected. In particular, she referred to the condition included in the CWB contract to require the contractor to closely monitor the impacts of the works on IEC and submit regular monitoring reports, and enquired whether HyD had detected the Incident through such monitoring reports, or that it was the contractor who had reported the Incident to HyD.

34. D of Hy responded that the contractor had first reported the Incident to the resident site supervision team engaged by HyD, which was required to immediately inform HyD of any incident regardless of whether the incident could be handled on site. The above monitoring mechanism had therefore served its intended purpose of alerting HyD to any abnormal situation as soon as it arose, so that the contractor of the reprovisioning works could be

immediately instructed to temporarily suspend underground excavation, and that soil stabilization measures such as grouting and backfilling could also be taken in a timely manner.

35. Mr WONG Kwok-hing urged the Administration to draw lessons from the Incident which according to him had first been disclosed by the media and not the Administration. In his view, the Administration should positively respond to the media report on the Incident instead of trying to play down the issue by emphasizing that its implications were insignificant. USTH responded that the Administration took seriously any incidents that concern public safety. He and D of Hy further explained that the Administration had indeed taken measures to tackle the Incident before the relevant media report was published. D of Hy supplemented that the Administration had in fact responded to the Incident in a timely and appropriate manner as demonstrated below –

- (a) As soon as it noted that there was a slight movement of the bridge abutment of the Slip Road, and had observed some more-than-expected widening of the movement joint above the abutment, HyD carried out a series of follow-up measures in early February 2011, including instructing the contractor of the reprovisioning works to temporarily suspend underground excavation and carry out soil stabilization measures such as grouting and backfilling;
- (b) Since it was only natural that project implementation would encounter hiccups from time to time, there was a need to determine what incidents should be reported on the basis of whether public safety was endangered, instead of overloading the public with excessive information. As such, in recognition that the Incident would not endanger public safety, the Administration considered that there was no need for proactive public announcement. Subsequent media interviews of engineering professionals had also confirmed that the Incident did not endanger the safety of the public; and
- (c) After the Administration had become aware that the Incident had aroused public concern, it had immediately made the necessary clarifications to assure the public.

Notwithstanding the above explanation, HyD would examine whether issues which might cause public concerns should be disclosed earlier in future in the light of Mr WONG Kwok-hing's views.

36. Mr LAU Kong-wah asked how the Administration would in future ascertain the need to inform the public about similar incidents in keeping with rising public expectations on transparency. In response, apart from further explaining the fact that the Administration had responded to the Incident in a timely and appropriate manner, D of Hy also assured members that in future the Administration would determine whether the public should be alerted of incidents as soon as practicable according to whether the incident involved public safety and/or would cause great inconvenience to the public.

Likely causes of the Incident

37. Miss Tanya CHAN noted that the results of the investigations which the Administration had separately requested the contractor and the engineering consultant to conduct on the incident were expected to be available in late March 2011 the earliest, and enquired whether the results would be published or used for internal reference only. D of Hy explained that HyD had to carefully review the reports to ascertain their validity given the contractual liability and hence legal implications involved, and would report to the Panel on the outcome after the review. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung opined that the results should be uploaded onto the Internet to enable relevant professionals to ascertain their validity.

38. Mr Albert CHAN queried whether the Incident had been caused by factors not disclosed, given the impacts of the reprovisioning works on IEC should have been carefully assessed as was the normal procedure before the works commenced, and such pre-project assessment had always worked well to prevent such incidents in the past. In particular, he was concerned about the workmanship of IEC, and whether the reprovisioning works had been conducted in a proper manner. With a number of major infrastructural projects such as the Shatin to Central Link and the South Island Line in the pipeline, he was keen to ensure that pre-project impact assessment would be improved to prevent recurrence of the Incident.

39. In response, D of Hy made the following points –

- (a) According to track records, the above-mentioned project impact assessment mechanism had been successful in ensuring the implementation of many infrastructural projects without affecting nearby structures. The mechanism had in fact also helped identify the Incident;
- (b) As understood from the contractor and the engineering

consultant investigating into the causes of the Incident, they would conduct their investigations from two perspectives, namely whether improper construction of the pipe piles for the re-provisioning works had caused the Incident, and whether certain previously unknown geological conditions in the reclaimed land on which the abutment concerned was built were at play. HyD considered the above investigation approaches appropriate, and believed the investigation results could help shed light on how impacts of future projects should be assessed and monitored; and

- (c) As to whether any omission in assessing the impacts of the CWB project on IEC had caused the Incident, since the relevant investigations were still underway, it might be premature to draw any such conclusion. However, as a preventive measure, an engineering consultant had long been engaged for the design and supervision of the CWB project. A system was also in place to ensure that the consultant would perform his tasks satisfactorily. For example, the consultant was required to have attained the ISO 9000 standard, and in meeting the standard, the consultant had to introduce an internal audit procedure to ensure the quality of project design.

40. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung opined that the Incident could demonstrate that Tai Kok Tsui residents were justly concerned about the impacts of the construction of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link on their property. He considered it necessary to quickly find out the party responsible for the Incident, and expressed concern about the large number of former HyD staff presently working in consultancy firms undertaking projects for HyD, which in his view could give rise to problems in monitoring the projects concerned. D of Hy responded that well-established procedures were already available to ensure that there would not be any conflict of interests in vetting tenders, and that HyD's outsourcing decisions would be made fairly. At the request of Mr LEUNG and the Chairman, D of Hy agreed to provide information on the number of former HyD staff, if any, presently working in consultancy firms undertaking projects for HyD.

Admin

Monitoring efforts to ensure the structural safety of road bridges

General measures

41. Noting that monitoring markers would in general be installed on the

structural components of major road bridges, Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired about their number and whether they would be installed only when there were works in the vicinity. D of Hy responded that where IEC was concerned, such devices had been installed on all structural components because there were works nearby, and that the Administration attached great importance to IEC's structural safety.

42. Ms Miriam LAU sought details on the range of distance between a road bridge and a new project within which the project's impacts would be assessed and monitored. D of Hy advised that monitoring requirements were determined according to the results of risk assessment conducted in the light of the distance of the new project from the road bridge concerned, the nature of the new project such as whether deep tunnel works affecting soil strata were involved, etc. As such, no specific distance requirement for the assessment of project impacts had been set.

43. Concerned that earthquakes, flooding or droughts in Hong Kong's neighbourhood might affect soil stability of Hong Kong, Mr Jeffrey LAM asked whether additional monitoring measures had been taken to ensure the structural safety of road bridges in Hong Kong.

44. D of Hy responded that to ensure the structural safety of road bridges in Hong Kong, contractors were required to take appropriate monitoring measures commensurate with the nature and scale of the works under the contracts and the potential risks that might be encountered, e.g. by regularly taking soil and rock samples. He further assured members that soil conditions might not necessarily affect the structural safety of roads. For example, certain roads in Tin Shui Wai were constructed over limestone caves. Even if there were leakages of underground water pipes or changes in ground water conditions, the resultant soil loss would only cause partial collapse of road surface. Noting the above response, Mr Jeffrey LAM proposed that HyD should co-ordinate with the Water Supplies Department to ensure proper maintenance of water mains to minimize pipe leakage.

Specific measures to ensure the structural safety of the Island Eastern Corridor

45. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired how HyD would gear up efforts to monitor the impacts of the reprovisioning works on IEC apart from requiring the contractor concerned to establish special measures to closely monitor the impacts. D of Hy responded that apart from entrusting the contractor to take monitoring measurements, site staff of the CWB project, comprising staff of HyD and/or the consultants engaged by HyD to supervise the project, would

also take measurements of their own to monitor the impacts.

46. Miss Tanya CHAN learnt that to facilitate the grouting works, temporary struts would be installed to provide additional support to the bridge deck near the abutment affected by the Incident to reduce the loading on the abutment. Keen to ensure that these temporary struts would not block the way and affect the public, she asked where they would be installed. In response, D of Hy assured members that the struts would not affect use of the Slip Road because they would only be installed under the Road. The area concerned was being partly enclosed as a works site, and partly used for access to another works site, thus not used by the public.

47. Ms Miriam LAU noted that HyD had been carrying out regular inspections for IEC, its slip roads and accesses in accordance with the established arrangements for safety inspection of bridge structures : including 6-monthly regular inspections and 2-yearly general inspections. In response to her enquiry on the details of the above inspections, D of Hy advised that the regular inspections would be conducted mainly visually on all road bridges, and that general inspections would be conducted using equipment, such as that used to measure the surface hardness and chlorination of concrete. Ms LAU opined that to ensure safety, equipment or at least simple tools should be used to conduct the 6-monthly regular inspections instead of only conducting visual inspections. D of Hy responded that equipment would also be used during regular inspections where necessary.

48. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired which party was responsible for conducting the above inspections. D of Hy responded that inspections were conducted by contractors who were required to engage personnel qualified and experienced in the construction and maintenance of road bridges to perform the duties. Noting the response, Mr LEUNG opined that third parties should also be involved in conducting the inspections.

Concerns about whether road bridges in Hong Kong could stand earthquakes

49. Mr KAM Nai-wai opined that any incident that involved movements of bridge abutments was worrying, especially as recently many earthquakes had occurred in the neighborhood of Hong Kong. He enquired about the magnitude of earthquake Hong Kong road bridges could stand, and whether real-time data on movements of abutments of all road bridges in Hong Kong would be tracked.

50. D of Hy responded that the earthquake factor had been taken into consideration in all road bridge projects in Hong Kong, although wind speed

instead of earthquake was a major factor that would affect the safety of local road bridges. Since Hong Kong road bridges were all designed to stand wind speeds of over 250 km/h, and that the impacts of winds were similar to those from earthquakes with both being horizontal movements in essence, road bridges of Hong Kong could all stand earthquakes of an intensity of 7. He further reported that all important road bridges in the territory, such as Tsing Ma Bridge, Kap Shui Mun Bridge and Stonecutters Bridge, were equipped with monitoring markers that could produce real-time data on movements and vibrations of abutments to facilitate the monitoring of the structural health of the bridges.

51. In response to Mr LAU Kong-wah, D of Hy confirmed that the above earthquake performance standard had long been adopted in Hong Kong. The Administration had, however, been examining the need to raise the standard in the light of latest developments overseas. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, however, considered it bureaucratic to adopt such a high earthquake performance standard regardless of the fact that Hong Kong did not lie in any earthquake zone. In his view, if a more pragmatic approach were to be adopted, more resources should be used to ensure proper maintenance of road bridges, such as by using equipment to conduct inspections on them.

VI Any other business

52. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:40 am.