

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)783/11-12
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Ref: CB1/PS/1/08/1

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Minutes of meeting on Friday, 4 November 2011, at 8:30 am in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** :
- Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)
 - Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
 - Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
 - Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
 - Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
 - Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
 - Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
 - Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
 - Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
 - Hon WONG Sing-chi
 - Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
 - Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
 - Hon Tanya CHAN
 - Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Members absent** :
- Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
 - Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
 - Hon CHAN Hak-kan
 - 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
- Ms Rebecca PUN
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)2
- Mr José YAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing(Transport)4
- Mr K M LEUNG
Acting Deputy Director/Regulatory Services
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
- Ms LUI Ying
Assistant Commissioner/Bus and Railway
Transport Department
- Attendance by invitation** : **Agenda item IV**
- Mr David LEUNG
Chief of Operations Engineering
MTR Corporation Limited
- Mr Ivan LAI
Head of Operating
MTR Corporation Limited
- Mr Terry WONG
Infrastructure Implementation Manager
MTR Corporation Limited
- Mr Jeff LEUNG
Senior Manager – External Affairs
MTR Corporation Limited
- Clerk in attendance** : Ms Joanne MAK
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Mr Franco KWONG
Council Secretary (1)2

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

I Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman (if required)

Ms Miriam LAU, the incumbent Chairman, sought members' views on whether re-election of the Chairman was necessary. Members agreed that there was no need for re-election and Ms Miriam LAU should remain as the Chairman of the Subcommittee for the 2011-2012 session.

II Schedule of meetings for the 2011-2012 session

2. Members agreed on the proposed meeting schedule tabled at the meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)234/11-12(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)199/11-12(02) — List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed to discuss "Design of next generation of railway stations" and "New trains for the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL)" at the next regular meeting scheduled for Friday, 13 January 2012, at 8:30 am.

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MTRCL

4. Members also agreed that when the Subcommittee discussed the design of next generation of railway stations at the next meeting, a paper on the updated position on the retrofitting of platform screen doors (including the retrofitting of automatic platform gates on the East Rail Line) should also be provided by MTRCL for discussion. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to coordinate with MTRCL to provide the paper.

IV Recent railway incidents and follow-up discussion on MTR rail breakage incidents

(LC Paper
CB(1)2973/10-11(01)

No. — MTRCL's paper on "Review of MTR's Rail Procurement and Maintenance Regime"

LC Paper CB(1)2973/10-11(02)	No.— Administration's paper on "Government's Assessment on the Consultancy Report on Rail Commissioned by the MTR Corporation Limited"
LC Paper CB(1)2973/10-11(03)	No.— MTRCL's paper on railway service performance for the period between 1 July and 15 August 2011
LC Paper No. CB(1)234/11-12(02)	— MTRCL's paper on railway service performance for the period between 16 August and 30 September 2011
LC Paper CB(1)2922/10-11(01) and (02)	No.— Supplementary information provided by the Administration/MTRCL in response to Subcommittee members' requests raised at previous meetings held to discuss railway incidents
LC Paper No. CB(1)199/11-12(03)	— Information note on railway incidents prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

5. The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**). Mr Abraham SHEK declared that he was an independent non-executive director of MTRCL.

IRT Review

6. With the aid of Powerpoint presentation, MTRCL briefed the Subcommittee on the findings of the review of the Institute of Railway Technology of the Monash University (IRT) on rail procurement and maintenance. The Administration briefed the Subcommittee on its paper on the Administration's assessment on the consultancy report of IRT.

7. The Subcommittee noted the major findings of the IRT review on the following aspects –

- (a) procurement process of rails from suppliers;

Action

- (b) control and quality assurance and incoming goods inspection in Hong Kong to check for any damage which might have occurred during shipping;
- (c) MTRCL's rail inspection regime involving visual inspection and non-destructive testing, etc. as well as the frequency of inspection and the training and qualification of personnel carrying out the testing work; and
- (d) management of broken and defective rails, e.g. MTRCL's response to rail breakages.

8. In response to members' concerns, MTRCL advised that it had made reference to international standards in rail procurement, quality control, inspection and maintenance adopted by overseas railway systems with a level of passenger loading comparable with that of the MTR network. Subcommittee members urged MTRCL to expeditiously implement the improvement recommendations from IRT as set out in paragraphs 20 to 26 of the MTRCL's paper under discussion. The Administration advised that to ensure railway safety, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) would keep track of the latest technological developments to ensure that MTRCL would follow the appropriate safety and maintenance standards.

9. Some members expressed concern that MTRCL would take one year to have a system of independent examination and certification based on the ISO9712 standard ready for implementation, and urged MTRCL to shorten the time for the preparation work. EMSD advised that it had been discussing with MTRCL to see if the preparation time could be shortened to about six to nine months. The Subcommittee requested MTRCL to follow up. MTRCL explained that it would take time to train staff to assist them to acquire the relevant qualifications before implementation of the new measures.

MTR railway service performance

10. MTRCL briefed the Subcommittee on its papers on the recent MTR railway service performance for the period between 1 July and 30 September 2011. The Subcommittee noted that during the said period, the number of delays of 8 minutes or more totalled 86, as follows –

- Heavy rail network : 63
- Light Rail network : 23

Action

11. Subcommittee members in general expressed grave dissatisfaction with the large number of delays of 8 minutes or more recorded in the last summer. They sought the Administration's comments on the MTR railway service performance and queried whether the frequent occurrence of incidents was linked to the outsourcing of maintenance work of MTRCL and the aging of the MTR rail network. In particular, members noted from the MTRCL's paper that there were about 1 200 staff employed under MTRCL's major outsourced maintenance and infrastructure contracts in 2010, which was approximately a quarter of MTRCL's total manpower in the area of maintenance and infrastructure. Subcommittee members were concerned whether this had adversely affected the work quality of rail inspection and maintenance. Some members opined that the MTRCL should make compensation to passengers affected in railway incidents and penalize MTRCL.

12. Some members also pointed out that since 2008, the total investment in maintenance, repair and renewal of railway assets had increased by about 17.5%, whereas the manpower resources (number of full-time maintenance staff) had only increased by about 2.6%. These members expressed concern about the adequacy of the increase in maintenance manpower.

13. In response, MTRCL made the following points –

- (a) the Corporation had a well established monitoring system to ensure that its outsourced maintenance work met the required standards. The Corporation applied the same standards and requirements to maintenance tasks carried out by MTR in-house staff and contractors' staff;
- (b) MTRCL had achieved maintenance manpower saving in recent years by automation of work ;
- (c) MTRCL did not consider that there was a link between the number of delays and the number of contractors' staff.

14. The Administration also made the following points –

- (a) a large majority of the train service delays were actually caused by passenger behaviour and external factors as reflected by the following statistics –

Action

	Average number of railway incidents per month caused by equipment failure/staff factor	Average number of railway incidents per month caused by passenger behaviour and external factor
2008	7	130
2009	8	132
2010	8	139
2011 (January to September)	11	147

Based on the above, the number of railway incidents was considered acceptable from the regulatory authority's point of view;

- (b) since MTRCL's implementation of improvement measures after the service disruption of Tsuen Wan Line on 21 October 2010, the Administration was generally satisfied with the performance of MTRCL in the handling of railway incidents.

Admin/
MTRCL 15. At the request of the Subcommittee, the Administration/MTRCL agreed to provide supplementary information on the deployment of outsourced staff employed by MTRCL and the number of them responsible for carrying out rail inspection in the past three years.

V. Any other business

16. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:30 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 January 2012

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Proceedings of the meeting on Friday, 4 November 2011, at 8:30 am in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
Agenda item I – Election of Chairman			
000130 – 000155	Ms Miriam LAU Ir Dr Raymond HO	The Subcommittee considered the election of Chairman unnecessary.	
Agenda item II – Schedule of meetings for the 2011-2012 session			
000156 – 000236	Chairman	Schedule of meetings	
Agenda item III – Items for discussion at the next meeting			
000237 – 000629	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Mr Andrew CHENG	Discussion on agenda items for the next regular meeting. Subcommittee's request that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) should provide a paper on the updated information about retrofitting of automatic platform gates at stations of East Rail Line (ERL) before the next meeting.	MTRCL to provide information (para. 4 of the minutes)
Agenda item IV –Recent railway incidents and follow-up discussion on MTR rail breakage incidents			
000630 – 002524	Chairman Administration MTRCL	Briefing by the Administration and powerpoint presentation on the review of MTR's rail procurement and maintenance regime by the MTRCL (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)2973/10-11(01) and (02)).	
002525 – 003320	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration Mr Andrew CHENG	Mr WONG Kwok-hing's view and enquiries – (a) it was unacceptable that there were as many as 86 train delay cases (eight minutes or more) recorded from 1 July to 30 September 2011 and his request that the Administration should give an account of its assessment on the MTRCL's service performance and rail safety; and (b) expression of concern about any relationship between the number of contractor staff employed by MTRCL and the large number of train delay cases.	
003321 – 004130	MTRCL	Powerpoint presentation on the MTR railway service performance (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)2973/10-11(03) and CB(1)234/11-12(02)).	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
004131 – 005223	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration MTRCL	<p>In response to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's previous enquiries, the Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) was responsible for monitoring railway safety. Although the average number of railway incidents per month caused by equipment failure and human factor had increased from seven in 2008 to 11 in 2011, the Administration considered the standard of railway safety acceptable; and</p> <p>(b) after the Tsuen Wan Line (TWL) service disruption on 21 October 2010, improvement measures had been introduced by MTRCL for better handling of incidents. In recent incidents, the dissemination of information about train services available and alternative means of public transport had been improved. The stranded passengers were effectively channelled.</p> <p>The MTRCL responded that in 2010, there were about 1 200 staff employed under MTRCL's major outsourced maintenance and infrastructure contracts. MTRCL stressed that all outsourced works had to comply with its requirements and service level to ensure service quality.</p>	
005224 – 010540	Chairman Mr Andrew CHENG MTRCL Administration	<p>Mr Andrew CHENG's views –</p> <p>(a) noting that over 80% of the delay cases involved equipment failures and nearly half of them were related to ERL, he considered that there was a system ageing problem of ERL and the regular maintenance inspections could not effectively prevent frequent occurrence of equipment failures; and</p> <p>(b) since 2008, the total investment in maintenance, repair and renewal of railway assets increased by 17.5%, but the manpower resources (number of full-time maintenance staff) only increased by 2.6%. He considered the increase in maintenance manpower insufficient.</p> <p>The MTRCL's response –</p> <p>(a) in recent years, additional resources and manpower had been allocated to strengthen railway maintenance; and</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>(b) computerization of maintenance works had resulted in manpower saving.</p> <p>The Administration responded that there was no sign that the increase in train delay cases had posed a risk to railway safety.</p> <p>Mr Andrew CHENG commented that the Administration failed to fulfil its role of monitoring railway safety and to address the railway system aging problem.</p>	
010541 – 011430	Chairman Ms LI Fung-ying Administration MTRCL	<p>Ms LI Fung-ying's enquiries –</p> <p>(a) whether MTRCL had compared its train frequency and loading capacity against other overseas railway systems of similar frequency and loading characteristics for selecting appropriate international standards of rail maintenance to comply with;</p> <p>(b) whether the Administration had the same findings as pointed out by the review of IRT; and</p> <p>(c) why IRT was not able to judge a rail breakage case due to the lack of relevant information.</p> <p>The MTRCL's response –</p> <p>(a) MTRCL had made benchmarking comparisons with the major railway systems in Europe of similar train frequency and loading capacity; and</p> <p>(b) for the case that IRT could not judge, the defected rail was installed at a freight yard for many years (before the rail merger) and the record of track laying works was missing. MTRCL stressed that public safety was not affected.</p> <p>The Administration responded that EMSD had from time to time met with MTRCL and conducted site visits to explore new measures, such as purchasing a new ultrasonic testing vehicle which could detect rail cracks of not less than 2mm in width and adopting the ISO9712 standards, to enhance the MTRCL's maintenance standards.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
011431 – 012158	Chairman Ir Dr Raymond HO Administration MTRCL	<p>While appreciating the new measures for handling railway incidents, Ir Dr Raymond HO considered that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) MTRCL should conduct an analysis of the product reliability of different manufactures to facilitate future tendering processes; (b) there was a need to maintain sufficient manpower for monitoring the works of outsourced workers; and (c) MTRCL could adopt a standard even higher than the European standards for MTR maintenance work. <p>The MTRCL's response –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) MTRCL would make reference to the latest technology development and prepare tender specifications for inviting tenderers worldwide; and (b) consideration would be given to increasing manpower for monitoring the works of outsourced workers, when necessary. <p>The Administration responded that EMSD would keep close liaison with overseas railway regulators for keeping track of latest technological developments to ensure MTRCL would follow the appropriate safety and maintenance standards.</p>	
012159 – 013041	Chairman Mr WONG Sing-chi Administration MTRCL	<p>Expressing disappointment with the railway services, Mr WONG Sing-chi considered that MTRCL should make compensation to the passengers affected by train delays; and the Administration should impose penalties on MTRCL.</p> <p>While understanding that train delays would cause inconvenience to passengers, MTRCL stressed that the most important thing was to maintain railway safety.</p> <p>The Administration responded that after the TWL service disruption in October 2010, the Secretary for Transport and Housing had served a notice to the Chief Executive Officer of MTRCL stating that the Administration took a serious view of the MTRCL's handling of the incident, and that any failure of a</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		similar scale and/or nature in the future could lead to punitive action to be taken.	
013042 – 013941	Chairman Mr IP Wai-ming MTRCL	<p>Mr IP Wai-ming's request and enquiries –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the information about the number of outsourced workers and their deployments in recent three years; (b) apart from the case related to the defected rail at freight yard, he enquired whether other rail records were found missing; and (c) he expressed grave concern on the information dissemination of service disruption. On 2 November 2011, he took MTR from Po Lam Station to North Point Station. There was no public announcement on the train or in the stations of Tseung Kwan O Line to inform passengers of the service disruption of Island Line. Subsequently, he and a number of passengers were stranded at North Point Station. <p>The MTRCL's response –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) MTRCL employed registered maintenance contractors in accordance with the actual needs and statutory requirements. The information requested would be provided later; (b) no other rail record was found missing; and (c) on 2 November 2011, there was an equipment failure at Shau Kei Wan Station. Because of the incident, the train service patterns of Island Line was changed, running at every three minutes between Sheung Wan Station and Tai Koo Station; and every five minutes between Chai Wan Station and Tai Koo Station. Public announcements were made in the stations of Island Line. MTRCL undertook to review the information dissemination mechanism. <p>Chairman remarked that consideration should be given to informing passengers of other railway lines of the changes of train service patterns.</p>	The MTRCL to provide information (para. 15 of the minutes)

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
013942 – 014510	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration	<p>Mr WONG Kwok-hing's concern/enquiry –</p> <p>(a) the Administration's assessment on the MTRCL's rail service performance; and</p> <p>(b) whether the Administration would review the MTRCL's outsourcing arrangements.</p> <p>The Administration's response –</p> <p>(a) there was no significant increase in the number of train service delays of eight minutes or more; and no systematic safety problem was found; and</p> <p>(b) the Administration requested MTRCL that all outsourced works had to comply with MTRCL's requirements and service level to ensure service quality.</p>	
014511 – 015145	Chairman Ms LI Fung-ying MTRCL Administration	<p>Ms LI Fung-ying's enquiries –</p> <p>(a) whether the quality of rail inspection and maintenance might be affected by outsourcing of maintenance service; and</p> <p>(b) why the MTRCL needed to take one year to prepare the implementation of ISO9712 standards.</p> <p>The MTRCL's response –</p> <p>(a) there was no sign that the quality of rail inspection and maintenance was affected by outsourcing of maintenance service; and</p> <p>(b) before implementing ISO9712 standards, MTRCL needed to provide relevant training to its staff and obtain the certification from an overseas independent institute.</p> <p>EMSD responded that it had been discussing with MTRCL to see if the preparation time could be shortened to six to nine months.</p>	
015146 – 015402	Chairman Mr Abraham SHEK	<p>Mr Abraham SHEK's declaration of interest and suggestion that a site visit could be conducted to facilitate members to better understand the MTRCL's maintenance works.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
015403 – 015924	Chairman Mr IP Wai-ming MTRCL	Mr IP Wai-ming's view that although the rail breakage case at freight yard did not pose risk to public safety, MTRCL should make efforts to ensure staff safety. The MTRCL responded that this incident did not affect the safety of MTRCL's staff.	

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