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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Meeting on 4 July 2014

Updated background brief on the construction of
the Shatin to Central Link

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the construction of the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL"). It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by the Legislative Council Members during previous discussions on this project.

Background

2. SCL, with a total length of 17 kilometres, consists of two sections –

(a) Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section:

This is the extension of Ma On Shan Line from Tai Wai to Hung Hom, via Southeast Kowloon and connects to the West Rail Line. It will increase the Shatin-Kowloon rail capacity and provide railway service to the new developments in Southeast Kowloon; and

(b) Hung Hom to Admiralty Section:

This is an extension of the existing East Rail Line ("ERL") from Hung Hom across the Harbour to Hong Kong Island. It can interchange with the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section at

Hung Hom. It will increase the cross-harbour rail capacity and enhance the connectivity between the New Territories and Hong Kong Island.

The proposed alignment plan is at **Appendix I**.

3. In March 2008, the Executive Council decided to proceed with the implementation of SCL project using the "concession approach". While the Administration is responsible for the construction costs of SCL, the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") is entrusted with the planning and design of the project. Upon completion of the construction, MTRCL will be granted a service concession for the operation of the railway line while the Administration will receive a service concession payment annually.

4. The Finance Committee ("FC") approved the funding for the design and site investigation works of SCL in May 2008. Also, FC approved the funding of about \$ 695 million, including \$152.6 million in July 2010 and \$ 541.6 million in June 2011 for the construction of protection works in Wan Chai Development Phase II and for SCL tunnel at Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter respectively. The Administration has carried out the preliminary design in parallel with public consultation for SCL since late 2008. SCL scheme was subsequently gazetted on 26 November 2010 and the statutory consultation process also commenced. Taking into consideration public concerns, amendments to the scheme were gazetted on 15 July and 11 November 2011 respectively. According to the Administration, the major public concerns on SCL project cover the following issues –

- (a) ventilation facilities and emergency accesses;
- (b) temporary works site and construction facilities;
- (c) station entrances and pedestrian links with nearby areas;
- (d) resumption of underground strata;
- (e) proposed stabling siding; and
- (f) conservation of historical structures at former Tai Hom Village.

5. With a view to commencing SCL construction works in 2012, the Administration submitted the following funding applications to FC in February 2011 for approval –

- (a) the construction of the advance railway works of SCL at the Admiralty Station and Ho Man Tin Station (at an estimated cost of \$6,254.9 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices); and
- (b) the construction of the advance non-railway works of SCL (at an estimated cost of \$1,448.2 million in MOD prices).

The funding applications were approved by FC at its meeting on 18 February 2011.

6. Besides, the Administration further submitted the following funding applications to FC for approval –

- (a) SCL – construction of railway works – remaining works (at an estimated cost of \$65,433.3 million in MOD prices); and
- (b) SCL – construction of non-railway works – remaining works (at an estimated cost of \$5,983.1 million in MOD prices).

The funding applications were approved by FC at its meeting on 11 May 2012. The estimated construction cost for the entire SCL project is about \$ 79,800 million in MOD prices. The construction works for the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section are expected to be completed in 2018, whereas the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section is expected to be completed by 2020.

Major concerns expressed by the Legislative Council Members

7. Members have expressed views on SCL project in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Legislative Councils. Their major concerns on this subject are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Funding arrangement

8. At the meetings on 17 July 2007, 27 March 2008 and 23 March 2012, members of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") were concerned about the funding arrangements for SCL and discussed whether the Administration should adopt the "ownership approach" or "concession approach". The Administration explained that under the "ownership approach", MTRCL had to bear the risks associated with the construction and operation of SCL whereas under the "concession approach", the Administration had to bear the risk of receiving an income which was lower than the original estimate. The Administration had to take all factors into account in deciding whether the "concession approach" or the "ownership approach" should be adopted for different railway projects.

9. At the Subcommittee meetings on 4 November and 6 December 2010, 7 January 2011 and 2 March 2012, members in general expressed grave concern over the upsurge in SCL project cost. The Administration and MTRCL explained that the upsurge in project estimate from \$38.17 billion (in April 2007 prices) to over \$60 billion according to the latest estimate was attributed to the significant increase in construction material prices, changes made to the design upon incorporating public's views, and the need to cope with various technical requirements. Some members viewed that the construction works of SCL should commence as soon as possible, otherwise the inflated prices of construction materials would further increase the construction cost. At the meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") of FC on 18 April 2012, a member urged the Administration to put in place effective cost control measures in view of the huge investment involved.

Progress of SCL project

10. Members at the Subcommittee meeting on 6 December 2010 noted the delay of implementation of Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section and Hung Hom to Admiralty Section, which were originally scheduled for completion in 2015 and 2019 respectively. The Administration explained that as SCL works were large in scale, passing through a number of districts and involving many issues of public concern, they needed a longer than expected time to listen and consider the views and suggestions of the community and where appropriate, incorporate the feasible suggestions into the railway scheme for gazettal.

11. The Administration also briefed members that as extra strengthening works were required to avoid resumption of buildings, Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section would require six years to construct and was scheduled for completion in 2018. Because the construction works of Hung Hom to Admiralty Section were complex, together with the need to tie in with the programme of other projects, such as Wan Chai Development Phase II and Central-Wan Chai Bypass, the completion date for Hung Hom to Admiralty Section would be in 2020.

12. At the Subcommittee meetings on 6 December 2010, 2 March and 23 March 2012 as well as PWSC meeting on 18 April 2012, members expressed concern about the delay of implementation of SCL project and urged the Administration to advance the completion date of SCL project.

13. Sharing similar concern of the Subcommittee and PWSC members mentioned in paragraph 12, a Member on 6 July 2011 raised a Council question enquiring whether the Administration had assessed the impact of each year of delay in the commissioning of SCL on the crowdedness of ERL, the Ma On Shan Line and the two major interchange stations, namely Tai Wai Station and Kowloon Tong Station. Besides, he also asked whether relevant government departments, MTRCL and other public transport operators would form a task force to study how to coordinate and deploy different transport modes to meet the transport demand of members of the public before the commissioning of SCL in case it was delayed.

Design of train cars

14. Members at the Subcommittee meetings on 4 November 2010, 7 January 2011, 23 March and 30 March 2012, and 22 November 2013 showed worry that the train capacity would be reduced after the replacement of 12-car trains with 9-car trains for ERL. In response, MTRCL advised that if 9-car trains instead of the existing 12-car trains were used, the train frequency would be increased from about three minutes to about two minutes. As 27 trains would be operated in an hour, the carrying capacity of ERL would not be affected.

Station facilities

15. At the Subcommittee meetings on 27 March 2008, 2 March, 23 March and 30 March 2012, and PWSC meeting on 18 April 2012, members showed concern about provision of station facilities, such as

platform screens doors or automatic platform gates, toilet facilities, lifts and escalators, barrier-free access facilities and digital broadcasting systems. In response, MTRCL explained that to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities or special needs, facilities, like tactile guide paths, tactile station layout maps with audible device and escalator audible warning signals, would be provided at SCL stations. Other facilities of the new railway lines would also be enhanced, including ticket machines, public toilets, as well as platform screen doors or automatic platform gates.

Station design

16. Members at the Subcommittee meetings on 2 March and 23 March 2012 as well as PWSC meeting on 18 April 2012 expressed concern about station design of SCL. They urged the Administration and MTRCL to make reference to some overseas infrastructural projects to set aside a proportion of public areas in SCL stations for artwork display. On 4 January 2013, MTRCL informed the Subcommittee members that the MTR Station Art Programme was implemented for new railway projects, SCL included. Artwork to be displayed at stations along SCL would adopt the principles to strengthen community engagement and provide a more pleasant journey for passengers. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation of MTRCL's goodwill to promote art and to enhance the space inside railway stations. Regarding the display of art pieces, some members considered that MTRCL should formulate a policy to replenish or replace the art pieces on display. Some members also considered that MTRCL should provide a less commercial environment inside stations by reducing the number of advertising light boxes at MTR stations to give more space for display of art pieces.

Employment opportunities

17. At the Subcommittee meetings on 4 June 2010, 7 January 2011 and 23 March 2012, members urged MTRCL to give priority to local workers in the recruitment for SCL project and provide them with adequate training. In response, MTRCL advised that they had all along liaised closely with worker unions, Hong Kong Contractors Association and Hong Kong Construction Industry Council on matters of recruitment and training of local workers. In January 2011, MTRCL employed over 6 000 construction workers and most of them were local workers. During the construction peak period of SCL project, MTRCL would employ over 17 000 local construction workers. It would also stipulate

in contracts to require all contractors to provide necessary training to young workers.

Latest developments

18. In May 2014, the Administration¹ reported that archaeologists have unearthed monuments and antiques, including ancient wells, ceramic shards, coins and stone structures of the Song Dynasty and other periods, at the construction sites of SCL in To Kwa Wan in early April 2014. To ensure that the archaeological works will not be affected by the construction works of the To Kwa Wan Station of SCL project, MTRCL has suspended the construction works within the archaeological watching brief area. As a result, the sequence of some construction works have to be adjusted accordingly and the progress of the construction works have already been affected.

19. The Administration is invited to brief members on the construction of SCL at the Subcommittee meeting to be held on 4 July 2014.

Relevant papers

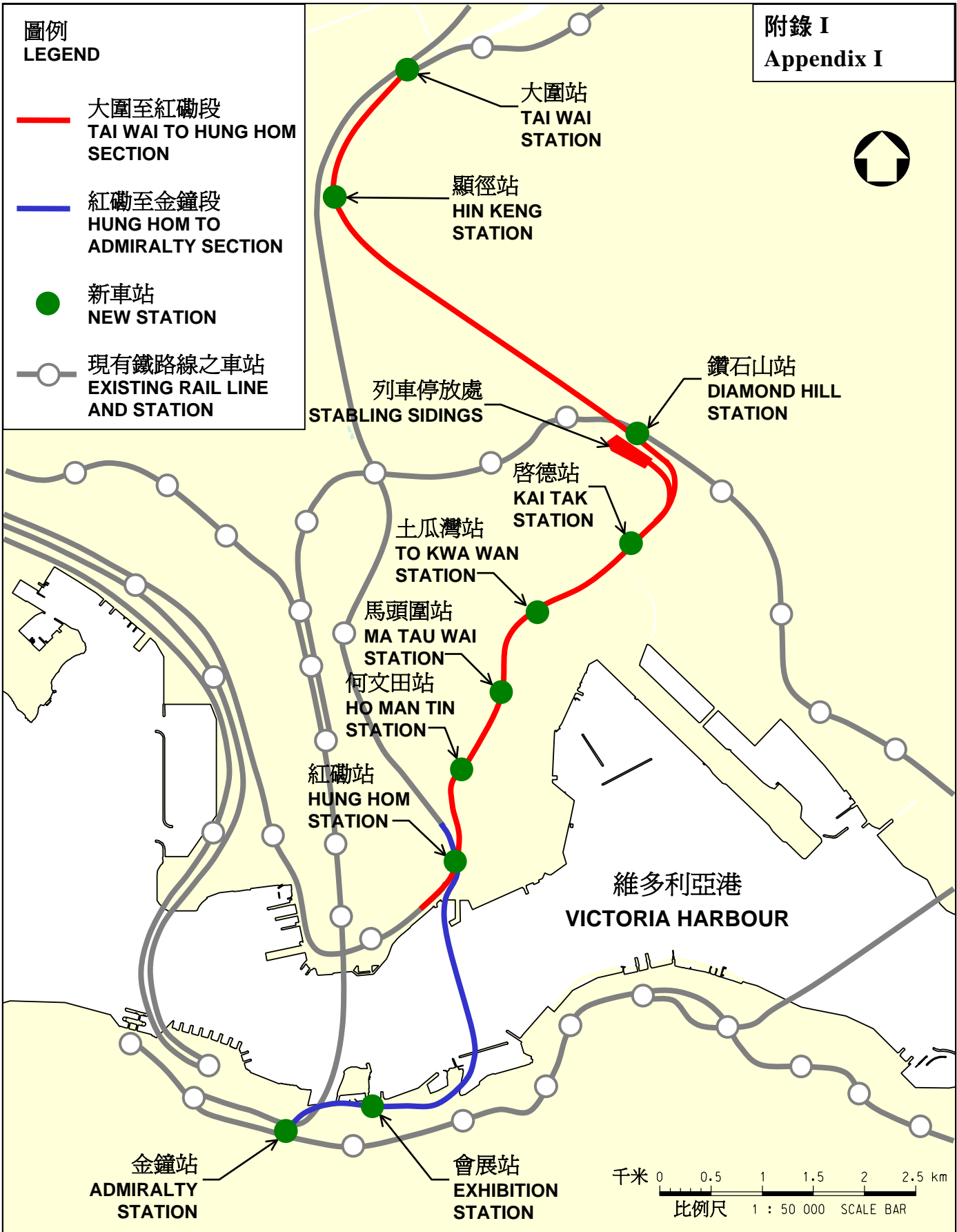
20. A list of relevant papers is at **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 July 2014

¹ Source: The Administration's press release on "LCQ2: Monuments and antiques unearthed at railway construction sites" issued on 21 May 2014

圖例
LEGEND

- 大圍至紅磡段
TAI WAI TO HUNG HOM SECTION
- 紅磡至金鐘段
HUNG HOM TO ADMIRALTY SECTION
- 新車站
NEW STATION
- 現有鐵路線之車站
EXISTING RAIL LINE AND STATION



圖則名稱 drawing title

擬建之沙田至中環線的走線
**PROPOSED ALIGNMENT OF
THE SHATIN TO CENTRAL LINK**

HRWSCL003-SK0192

圖號 drawing no.

HRWSCL003-SK0192

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Shatin to Central Link

List of relevant papers

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
16 July 2007	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on progress of Shatin to Central Link Project	CB(1)2058/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0716cb1-2058-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)2454/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rd070716.pdf
27 March 2008	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Legislative Council Brief on Shatin to Central Link and MTR Kwun Tong Line Extension	THB(T)CR 10/1016/99 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp-thbtcr10101699-e.pdf
		Administration's paper on funding application for the design of the Shatin to Central Link	CB(1)1036/07-08(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0327cb1-1036-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1374/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rd080327.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
11 March 2009	Council meeting	Hon Starry LEE raised a question on the impact of infrastructural projects in To Kwa Wan and Ma Tau Kok districts	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200903/11/P200903110149.htm
31 March 2009	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on progress of Shatin to Central Link Project	CB(1)1137/08-09(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0331cb1-1137-5-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1544/08-09 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20090331.pdf
28 October 2009	Council meeting	Hon James TO raised a question on the construction of Shatin to Central Link railway in the Kai Tak Development Area	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200910/28/P200910280123.htm
18 November 2009	Council meeting	Hon Mrs Regina IP raised a question on the temporary supporting facilities of Shatin to Central Link	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200911/18/P200911180197.htm

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
20 January 2010	Council meeting	Hon Starry LEE raised a question on the temporary works area of Shatin to Central Link	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201001/20/P201001200116.htm
4 June 2010	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on funding application – protection works for Shatin to Central Link in Wan Chai Development Phase II	CB(1)2088/09-10(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0604cb1-2088-2-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)2844/09-10 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20100604.pdf
4 November 2010	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on progress of Shatin to Central Link Project	CB(1)277/10-11(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1104cb1-277-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1068/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20101104.pdf
6 December 2010	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on funding application – advance works for Shatin to Central Link	CB(1)603/10-11(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1206cb1-603-1-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1161/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20101206.pdf
7 January 2011	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's supplementary information paper on funding application – advance works for Shatin to Central Link	CB(1)987/10-11(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0107cb1-987-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1547/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20110107.pdf
18 May 2011	Council meeting	Hon Starry LEE raised a question on the impact on various railway projects due to recent court judgement on environmental impact assessment	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201105/18/P201105180192.htm
6 July 2011	Council meeting	Hon CHAN Hak-kan raised a question on the programme for Shatin to Central Link project	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201107/06/P201107060194.htm

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
2 March 2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on progress of the Shatin to Central Link	CB(1)1154/11-12(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0302cb1-1154-3-e.pdf
		Administration's supplementary information paper on Shatin to Central Link - Progress report (follow-up paper)	CB(1)1340/11-12(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0302cb1-1340-1-e.pdf
		Minutes	CB(1)1772/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120302.pdf
23 March 2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on Shatin to Central Link – Funding Application for the Main Works	CB(1)1326/11-12(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0323cb1-1326-1-e.pdf
		Administration's supplementary information paper on Shatin to Central Link – Progress report (follow-up paper)	CB(1)1340/11-12(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0302cb1-1340-1-e.pdf
		Minutes	CB(1)2479/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120323.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
30 March 2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Legislative Council Brief: Shatin to Central Link – authorization of scheme following receipt of objections	THB(T)CR 10/1016/99 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0330-thbtcr10101699-e.pdf
		Administration's supplementary information paper on issues raised by the Subcommittee at its meeting on 23 March 2012	CB(1)1434/11-12(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0330cb1-1434-1-e.pdf
		Minutes	CB(1)2480/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120330.pdf
18 April 2012	Public Works Subcommittee	Administration's paper on "61TR – Shatin to Central Link – construction of railway works – remaining works"	PWSC(2012-13)1 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p12-01e.pdf
		Administration's paper on "62TR – Shatin to Central Link – construction of non-railway works – remaining works"	PWSC(2012-13)2 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p12-02e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Minutes	PWSC57/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20120418.pdf
11 May 2012	Finance Committee	Minutes	FC183/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc20120511.pdf
21 May 2014	Council Meeting	Hon CHAN Hak-kan raised a question on monuments and antiques unearthed at railway construction Sites	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201405/21/P201405210429.htm
4 June 2014	Council Meeting	Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan raised a question on construction works of Shatin to Central Link	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201406/04/P201406040323.htm
18 June 2014	Council Meeting	Hon Christopher CHUNG raised a question on Antiquities and monuments excavated from works site of MTR Shatin to Central Link	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201406/18/P201406180605.htm