

LC Paper No. CB(4)705/17-18 (These minutes have been seen by the Administration)

Ref: CB4/PL/TP/1

**Panel on Transport** 

# Minutes of meeting held on Friday, 17 November 2017, at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present	:	Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman) Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP Hon Claudia MO Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS Hon WU Chi-wai, MH Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP Hon CHAN Chi-chuen Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP

		Hon CHU Hoi-dick Hon HO Kai-ming Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH Hon CHAN Chun-ying Hon Tanya CHAN Hon LUK Chung-hung Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai Hon KWONG Chun-yu Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho	
Member attending	:	Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP	
Members absent	:	Hon LAM Cheuk-ting (Deputy Chairman) Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP	
Public Officers attending	:	Agenda item IIIMs Rebecca PUN Ting-ting, JP Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1Ms Judy CHUNG Sui-kei Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 5Mr Kelvin LO Kwok-wah Project Manager/Major Works Highways DepartmentMr Sam LAM Sai-wing Chief Engineer 1/Major Works Highways DepartmentDr Raymond SO, BBS, JP Under Secretary for Transport and Housing	

Mr Tony LI Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 2

Ms Stella LEE Assistant Commissioner for Transport / Management & Paratransit

Ms Vivian KWAN Chief Transport Officer / Tunnels & Tsing Ma 2

# Agenda item V

Dr Raymond SO, BBS, JP Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Ms Ivy LAW, JP Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 3

Mr Chris CHAN Assistant Commissioner for Transport / Planning

Mr CHAN Chung-hin Acting Chief Engineer / Transport Planning Transport Department

Mr Christopher CHIU Principal Transport Officer / Management Transport Department

Clerk in attendance :	Ms Sophie LAU		
	Chief Council Secretary (4)2		

Staff in attendance : Miss Joyce CHING Senior Council Secretary (4)2

> Ms Jacqueline LAW Council Secretary (4)2

# Miss Mandy LAM Legislative Assistant (4)2

I.	Information paper(s) issued since the	last meeting
	LC Paper Nos. CB(4)94/17-18(01) - and (02)	Letters dated 24 October 2017 from Hon WONG Ting-kwong and Hon Starry LEE Wai-king on withdrawal of membership (Chinese version only)
	LC Paper Nos. CB(4)103/17-18(01) - and (02)	Letters dated 24 October 2017 and 25 October 2017 respectively from Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan and Hon KWOK Wai-keung on withdrawal of membership (Chinese version only)
	LC Paper No. CB(4)110/17-18(01) -	Letter dated 25 October 2017 from Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him on withdrawal of membership (English version only)
	LC Paper Nos. CB(4)135/17-18(01) - and (02)	Letters from the Administration regarding the Net Revenue Statements of Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited and Route 3 (Country Park Section) Company Limited
	LC Paper No. CB(4)136/17-18(01) -	Joint letter dated 23 October 2017 from Hon

OR Chong-sing and Hon CHAN Han-pan on the shortage of parking space in Hong Kong (Chinese version only)

- LC Paper No. CB(4)225/17-18(01) Administration's response to the letter from Hon OR Chong-sing and Hon CHAN Han-pan on the shortage of parking space in Hong Kong
- LC Paper No. CB(4)152/17-18(01) Letter dated 27 October 2017 from Hon Claudia MO on proposed items for discussion by the Panel (Chinese version only)
- LC Paper No. CB(4)224/17-18(01) Administration's response to the letter from Hon Claudia MO on the progress of the matters relating boundary to crossing facilities at West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen \_ Hong Kong Express Rail Link

<u>Members</u> noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

#### II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(01)	-	List of outstanding items for discussion
LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(02)	-	List of follow-up actions

2. <u>Members</u> agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 15 December 2017 and advance the meeting to start at 10:00 am to allow more time for discussion–

- (a) Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme;
- (b) Implementation of a new generation of on-street parking meter system; and
- (c) Operational arrangements for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge ("HZMB") and the Hong Kong Boundary Control Facilities ("HKBCF")

(*Post-meeting note:* The regular meeting scheduled for 15 December 2017 had been cancelled to avoid clashing with the extended Council meeting of 13 December 2017. The agenda items on "Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme" and "Implementation of a new generation of on-street parking meter system" had been rescheduled to the special meeting held on 9 January 2018 and the regular meeting held on 19 January 2018 respectively. The HZMB item was tentatively postponed to the meeting to be held on 16 March 2018.)

3. <u>The Chairman</u> invited members to note that the Secretariat had issued a circular on 15 November 2017 (LC Paper No. CB(4)217/17-18) to consult members on the arrangement of two special meetings proposed to be held on 11 December 2017 at 4:30 pm and 22 January 2018 at 2:30 pm for receiving public views on "Parking Policy" and "Progress of implementation of Measures under Public Transport Strategy Study" respectively. If no comments were received from members by the close of play on 17 November 2017, the Secretariat would follow up with the meeting arrangement.

(*Post-meeting note:* the special meeting to receive public views on "Parking Policy" was scheduled for 11 December 2017 at 4:00 pm. A total of 41 deputations/individuals presented their views at the meeting. The special meeting to receive public views on "Progress of implementation of Measures under Public Transport Strategy Study" was scheduled for 22 January 2018 at 2:45 pm. A total of 28 deputations/individuals presented their views at the meeting.)

4. <u>The Chairman</u> consulted members' view on whether it was necessary to arrange any special meeting for receiving public views on "Biennial review on the need to issue new Private Driving Instructors' licences" (item 7 under the "List of outstanding items for discussion"). No members expressed any view

on this item. <u>The Chairman</u> remarked that there was no need to arrange a special meeting on this subject.

III.	6101TX – ''Universal Accessibility	" Programme
	LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(03)	<ul> <li>Administration's paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme</li> </ul>
	LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(04)	Paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief)
	LC Paper No. CB(4)211/17-18(01)	Submission from Office of PAU Ming Hong, Kwai Tsing District Council Member (Chinese version only)

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, <u>Deputy Secretary for Transport and</u> <u>Housing (Transport)1 ("DSTH(T)1")</u> briefed members on the latest progress of the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme and the Administration's work in 2018-19 under the Programme.

Progress of the retrofitting works under the UA Programme

6. <u>Mr POON Siu-ping</u> was concerned about the progress of the Original Programme and enquired about the anticipated completion date of the retrofitting works for 71 items under construction. In response, <u>Project Manager/ Major</u> <u>Works of Highways Department ("PM/ Major Works")</u> advised that the majority of the works of the above said items was anticipated to be completed by 2019.

7. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry,  $\underline{\text{DSTH}(T)1}$  responded that the number of existing walkways which required the installation of barrier-free access facilities was about 120, based on the information kept by the Highways Department ("HyD"). Preliminary study on how to take forward the works at these walkways would be undertaken.

8. In response to Mr WU Chi-wai's enquiry of whether the works of all the items listed under Annex II and Annex III of the Administration's paper (i.e. list of priority items under the "Expanded Programme" and list of items under the next Phase of the UA Programme ("the Next Phase") would mostly be completed by 2019, <u>PM/ Major Works</u> responded in the affirmative for items under construction.

# Budget / Cost

9. Noting that the budget for 2018-19 to implement the UA programme was \$730 million and that there would be 45 walkways under the Next Phase, <u>Mr POON Siu-ping</u> asked whether each of the above mentioned walkways was budgeted to be around \$16 million.

10. <u>PM/ Major Works</u> responded in the negative and explained that the budget for each financial year was meant to cover the cash flow requirement for all walkways in that financial year. <u>PM/ Major Works</u> further said that the works for each walkway would usually last for four to five years, from planning, design and consultation stage to construction stage. In this case, the budget for each walkway was not simply the total budget for the financial year divided by the number of walkways planned for implementation in that year.

#### Scope of the UA Programme

11. <u>Mr Michael TIEN</u> welcomed the Administration's plan to implement the Next Phase. <u>Mr TIEN</u> then enquired whether the scope of the UA Programme could be expanded to cover the footbridges which are not privately owned and no government department had taken up their management. He also pointed out that although those footbridges were built on government land, no government department was responsible for their management and maintenance nor the retrofitting works. Neither could private owners take forward any works on government land.

12. <u>DSTH(T)1</u> responded that the kind of footbridges mentioned by Mr Micheal TIEN would be covered under the Next Phase of the UA Programme as mentioned in paragraph 3 of the Administration's paper. In response to Mr TIEN's enquiry of whether the Administration had taken stock of the number of such non-government footbridges, <u>DSTH(T)1</u> responded that there was no data in this regard. In response to the Chairman's request, <u>DSTH(T)1</u> said that HyD would be requested to check if any data to this end had been kept.

(post-meeting note: The Administration advised that since the non-government walkways were not maintained by HyD, the

Department did not have information on such walkways.)

13. <u>Mr WU Chi-wai</u> urged the Administration to further expand the funding scope of the UA Programme to cover private estates, Home Ownership Schemes estates (such as, Po Pui Court) and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Housing Department (such as, Kwong Yuen Estate and Chuk Yuen North Estate). <u>Mr WU</u> suggested that in taking forward the works in the estates which he mentioned above, the Administration could first work out the eligibility criteria for the selection of walkways and come up with agreements with the private owners concerned on the sharing of cost and responsibilities to be borne by the Government and the relevant parties.

14. <u>Mr LUK Chung-hung</u> shared Mr WU Chi-wai's view and suggestion in relation to walkways connecting to private estates. <u>Mr LUK</u> also urged the Administration to cover walkways connecting to MTR stations and those in the estates managed by the Link Real Estate Investment Trust.

15. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> also urged the Administration to expand the funding scope of the UA Programme to cover Tenants Purchase Scheme estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Housing Department, where flats are available for purchase, as well as subsidized sale flats, so as to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents. Quoting Chuk Yuen North Estate as an example, <u>Mr CHAN</u> pointed out that the walkways leading to the main entrance of this estate only had staircases and that many elderly residents were frequent users of these walkways. <u>Mr CHAN</u> expressed that there was urgent need for installing barrier-free access facilities at the kind of walkways mentioned above. <u>Mr LAU Kwok-fan</u> shared Mr CHAN's view and made similar requests.

16.  $\underline{\text{DSTH}(\text{T})1}$  responded that under the existing policy, walkways which were privately owned would not be covered by the UA Programme. The intent of the above policy was to ensure the prudent use of public funds and to prevent the Government from taking over the land and relevant responsibility from private owners.

17. <u>The Chairman</u> asked the Administration to take note of Members' views and suggestions and explore the feasibility of expanding the scope of the UA Programme. <u>DSTH(T)1</u> said that Members' views and suggestions had been noted and the Administration would review the situation as appropriate.

The District Council consultation exercise

18. <u>Mr Michael TIEN</u> urged the Administration to implement the Next Phase in every District Council term so as to meet the aspirations of members of the

local communities for installing additional barrier-free access facilities.

19.  $\underline{\text{DSTH}(T)1}$  advised that the Administration would not be able to commit, at this stage, as to when and how frequent the District Councils ("DCs") would be further consulted and/or invited to make nominations on walkways in the future.  $\underline{\text{DSTH}(T)1}$  explained that since the new policy in relation to "universal accessibility" was announced in 2012, the responses from the public and DCs were overwhelming. Currently, the proposals in relation to 120 outstanding walkways had yet to be followed up. Depending on the progress of the outstanding works and proposals yet to be followed up, the Administration would plan for the next round of invitations.

20. <u>Dr Elizabeth QUAT</u> opined that the four criteria<sup>1</sup> for the selection of walkways by the DCs for inclusion in the UA Programme as set out in the Administration's paper were rigid. In particular, <u>Dr QUAT</u> commented that the criterion which specified that the walkways had to span across public roads maintained by the HyD was unreasonable. If there was strong public aspiration for installing barrier-free access facilities at those walkways, there was no point to exclude them from the UA Programme based on the above said criterion. For instance, the steep walkway at Kwong Yuen Estate which spanned across public roads not being maintained by the HyD would still be excluded from the UA Programme.

21. <u>DSTH(T)1</u> explained that when the Original Programme of the UA Programme was first launched in 2012, the scope of the retrofitting works of barrier-free access facilities was only confined to public walkways maintained by the HyD. In response to the aspirations of the public and Members, the Administration had suitably expanded the scope of the UA Programme and that the walkways eligible for consideration by DCs in the Next Phase were no longer confined to public walkways maintained by the HyD. As a result, many such walkways proposed by Members previously would now fall under the ambit of the UA Programme.

22. <u>Dr Elizabeth QUAT</u> also expressed that the allocation of a maximum of three walkways equally to each district was not fair to those with a larger

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The four criteria set out at paragraph 3 of LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(03) were:

<sup>(</sup>a) the walkways spanned across public roads maintained by the HyD;

<sup>(</sup>b) they were open for public access from public roads at all times;

<sup>(</sup>c) the walkways were not privately owned; and

<sup>(</sup>d) the parties responsible for the management and maintenance of these walkways agreed to such lift retrofitting proposals and were willing to cooperate with the Government during the implementation of the said lift retrofitting works as well as the subsequent management and maintenance works of the lifts.

population. <u>Dr QUAT</u> asked the Administration to consider making the population of each district as an allocation criterion. <u>Mr LUK Chung-hung</u> also pointed out that large districts, such as Yuen Long, should be entitled to nominate more walkways.

23. <u>DSTH(T)1</u> responded that the Administration had carefully considered the local situation of the districts when setting the quota for each district. In order to facilitate the reaching of consensus over the set of criteria for expanding the scope of the UA Programme and hence expedite the progress of implementation, the Administration had decided to use the criteria (including the allocation of a maximum of three walkways for each district) adopted in the previous round of consultation when inviting the DCs to make further nominations for implementation in the Next Phase. That said, since the UA Programme was an on-going initiative, the Administration would take into account members' views and review the selection criteria and the allocation to each district as appropriate.

24. <u>Dr Helena WONG</u> asked about the rationale for allocating a maximum of three walkways to each district in the first place and whether there would be room to increase the number of walkways allocated to each district.

25. <u>DSTH(T)1</u> said that the above mentioned allocation was worked out when the UA Programme was launched in 2012, having regard to factors like the availability of financial and manpower resources. The current focus was to finish the works of the items under construction and to take forward the implementation of the Next Phase as soon as possible. <u>DSTH(T)1</u> assured that the Administration would keep in view the viability of further increasing the number of walkways for priority implementation in the future.

#### Issues relating to lift installation and maintenance

26. In response to Dr Helena WONG's enquiry,  $\underline{\text{DSTH}(T)1}$  advised that it was the Administration's policy to install barrier-free access facilities at all the newly constructed footbridges and/or public walkway as far as practicable.

27. <u>Mr LUK Chung-hung</u> said he was given to understand that the progress of the UA Programme would hinge on the manpower supply for lift installation. In this connection, <u>Mr LUK</u> was concerned whether there was sufficient manpower to implement the proposals under the UA programme and to carry out the maintenance works in the future. <u>Mr LUK</u> then asked whether the Administration would collaborate with the relevant authorities and/or institutions to enhance the training on lift installation and maintenance for lift/escalator workers.

28. <u>PM/Major Works</u> advised that the current number of lifts to be installed under the UA Programme would be about 250, which was a small number in comparison with the current number of about 60 000 lifts in the territory. Based on the above figures, the additional manpower requirement for lift installation should be insignificant and that the existing manpower supply should not be over-stretched for implementing the UA Programme.

29. In response to the enquiry of the Chairman, <u>PM/ Major Works</u> supplemented that the Development Bureau and Construction Industry Council had been organizing training programmes on the concerned trades.

# Conclusion

30. In summing up, <u>the Chairman</u> urged the Administration to speed up the progress of the works of the outstanding items under the UA Programme. <u>The Chairman</u> also urged the Administration to take into account the views and suggestions of this Panel with a view to exploring the feasibility of expanding the scope of the UA Programme as well as including more items for implementation at each phase in the future.

#### <u>Motions</u>

31. <u>The Chairman</u> said that there were two motions, under the agenda item on "UA Programme", raised by members to be dealt with at this meeting.

32. At 11:08 am, the Chairman instructed the Clerk to ring the bell for 5 minutes.

33. <u>The Chairman</u> then referred members to the following motion moved by Mr Micheal TIEN -

"鑑於區議會對「下一階段計劃」十分支持,並已選出45條行人通道 推行加建升降機工程,但區議會對這計劃的需求仍然十分殷切,因 此,本人促請政府,在區議會每屆任期內繼續推行"人人暢道通行" 計劃的「下一階段計劃」,以滿足地區人士對增建無障礙通道設施的 訴求。"

# (Translation)

"The District Councils ("DCs") are very supportive of the "Next Phase" of the "Universal Accessibility" ("UA") Programme and have selected 45 walkways for implementation of the lift retrofitting works. However, as the demand of DCs for the UA Programme is still very keen, I urge the Government to continue to implement the "Next Phase" of the UA Programme in every DC term so as to meet the aspirations of members of the local communities for installing additional barrier-free access facilities."

34. <u>The Chairman</u> put the motion to vote. <u>The Chairman</u> ordered a division. A total of 18 members voted for the motion. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For	
Mr Jeffrey LAM	Mr CHAN Hak-kan
Mrs Regina IP	Mr Michael TIEN
Mr WU Chi-wai	Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr Charles Peter MOK	Mr CHAN Han-pan
Mr LEUNG Che-cheung	Dr Helena WONG
Dr Elizabeth QUAT	Mr POON Siu-ping
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok	Mr Wilson OR
Mr CHAN Chun-ying	Miss Tanya CHAN
Mr LUK Chung-hung	Mr LAU Kwok-fun
(18 members)	

35. <u>The Chairman</u> declared that the motion was carried.

36. <u>The Chairman</u> then referred members to the following motion moved by Mr CHAN Han-pan -

"本會促請政府將「人人暢道通行」計劃的資助範圍擴展至房委會及 房屋署轄下可供購買的租置計劃屋邨及資助出售房屋<sup>2</sup>,以方便人口 老齡化下長者居民的出入需要。"

# (Translation)

"This Panel urges the Government to expand the funding scope of the "Universal Accessibility" Programme to cover Tenants Purchase Scheme estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Housing Department, where flats are available for purchase, as well as subsidized

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> revised the wordings of his motion, by adding the seven words marked in bold and italic, i.e. "及資助出售房屋", at the suggestion of Mr WU Chi-wai.

sale flats, so as to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents in view of an ageing population."

37. <u>The Chairman</u> put the motion to vote. <u>The Chairman</u> ordered a division. A total of 19 members voted for the motion. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For	
Mr Jeffrey LAM	Mr CHAN Hak-kan
Mrs Regina IP	Mr Michael TIEN
Mr WU Chi-wai	Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr Charles Peter MOK	Mr CHAN Han-pan
Mr LEUNG Che-cheung	Dr Elizabeth QUAT
Mr POON Siu-ping	Dr CHIANG Lai-wan
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok	Mr Wilson OR
Mr CHAN Chun-ying	Miss Tanya CHAN
Mr LUK Chung-hung	Mr LAU Kwok-fun
Mr Jeremy TAM	
(19 members)	

38. <u>The Chairman</u> declared that the motion was carried.

(*Post-meeting note:* The wording of the two motions passed under agenda item III, i.e. "6101TX – "Universal Accessibility" Programme" [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)232/17-18(01)-(02)] were issued to members on 17 November 2017.)

39. The Administration was requested to provide written responses to the motions passed.

# IV. Proposals on revision of certain fees and charges relating to road traffic (Batch 4)

LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(05) -	Administration's paper on Proposals on revision of certain fees and charges relating to road traffic (Batch 4)
LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(06) -	Paper on revision to fees and charges relating to

road traffic prepared by

the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief)

40. At the invitation of the Chairman, the <u>Under Secretary for Transport and</u> <u>Housing ("USTH")</u> briefed members on the proposals to revise 16 government fee items relating to road traffic and to permanently exempt oversized franchised buses from the requirement to apply for permits for using government tunnels and control areas.

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# Revision of 16 government fees

41. <u>Mr YIU Si-wing</u> said that the 16 government fee items relating to road traffic under the proposed revision would not directly affect people's livelihood and that the proposed percentage increases of those items were acceptable. <u>Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok</u> also opined that the proposed revision was reasonable and expected that no heavy burden would be created on the transport trades as a result of the fee revisions. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> said that he did not have any strong views on the proposed revisions.

42. Noting that there would only be a net increase of about \$0.24 million in government revenue per annum after implementation of the 16 proposed government fee revisions, <u>Mr POON Siu-ping</u> expressed that the increase was on the low side. In view of the fact that the cost recovery rates of a number of items after the revisions were still less than 100%, <u>Mr POON</u> asked whether the fees of those items would be further adjusted annually in order to achieve full cost recovery.

43. <u>USTH</u> advised that, in line with the "user pays" principle, it was the Administration's policy that government fees and charges should in general be set at a level sufficient to recover the full cost of providing the relevant services. Responding to Mr POON Siu-ping's particular concern about the items the cost recovery rates of which were far less than 100%, <u>USTH</u> further advised that the Administration generally followed a set of guidelines for fee revisions in order to achieve full cost recovery progressively and to avoid fee adjustments which were too substantial. The guidelines were as follows: (a) adopting an increase of more than 20% for fees with existing cost recovery rate of less than 40%; (b) adopting an increase of about 15% for fees with existing cost recovery rate between 40% to 70%; (c) adopting an increase of about or below 10% for fees with existing cost recovery rate of over 70%; and (d) adjusting downward to full cost recovery for fees which were recovering more than the full cost.

44. <u>Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok</u> pointed out that the services for removal of vehicles and impounding vehicles (causing obstructions) provided by private operators usually cost at least a few hundred dollars. However, the government fees/charges for the provision of such services under some of the items of the proposed revisions were only about one hundred dollars or so. <u>Ir Dr LO</u> thus opined that the levels of fees/charges under the proposed revisions which involved removal of vehicles causing an obstruction in tunnels or control areas and impounding vehicles which caused obstruction within control areas were extraordinarily low. <u>The Chairman</u> shared Ir Dr LO's view. <u>Ir Dr LO</u> then queried why the fees/charges for the above mentioned items were set at such low levels.

45. <u>USTH</u> responded that the costs for providing the above said services included staff cost, departmental cost, cost of office facilities and central administrative cost. The Transport Department had been reviewing the work procedures and the mode of operation of those services periodically, with a view to enhancing efficiency by using new technology thereby achieving saving in cost.

46. In response to Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok's enquiry on whether the application and issue of vehicle permit for using tunnels and control areas (to vehicles which exceeded the requirements of the relevant Ordinances) could be arranged on-line, <u>Assistant Commissioner for Transport / Management & Paratransit ("ACMP")</u> advised that the applicants had to make such applications to the tunnel/control area operators concerned 48 hours in advance. <u>ACMP</u> explained that as the vehicles concerned were usually of huge sizes and thus discussion with the applicants on the necessary special arrangements would usually be required. Nevertheless, in practice, discretion would be exercised by the operators concerned in granting the permit on the spot as far as practicable.

Exemption from the requirement to apply for permits for using government tunnels and control areas

47. Noting that the Administration's proposal to exempt oversized franchised buses from the requirement to apply for permits for using government tunnels and control areas, <u>Mr YIU Si-wing</u> asked whether the proposed exemption would be permanent and whether such exemption would also be applicable to other new models of franchised buses to be introduced in the future. <u>Mr YIU Si-wing</u> and <u>Ms Claudia MO</u> also sought clarification on whether the above mentioned exemption would be granted upon application by franchised bus operators or such exemption would be automatic.

48. <u>ACMP</u> explained that, at present, franchised bus operators had to obtain

permission for use their oversized buses on public roads in accordance with the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. These buses also had to pass the trial run on the designated routes 374A). before they could be deployed on a particular bus route via government tunnels or control area, to ensure that they did not pose any risk to the structures of government tunnels and/or control areas, or to other tunnel users. If other oversized new models (say, models with dimensions which further exceeded that of the existing models of buses which were 12.8 meters in length and/or 2.55 meters in width) were introduced in the future, those buses would also have to pass the above mentioned trial run and obtain permission from Commissioner for Transport under Cap. 374A. In view of the above, for franchised operation, it was not necessary to require franchised buses to be subject to the existing requirement of applying permit for oversized vehicles to use government tunnels Hence, the Administration proposed to amend the and/ or control areas. relevant regulations so that oversized franchised buses could be exempted permanently from the above said requirement and that such exemption would be automatic if the buses concerned had passed the trial run and obtained permission from Commissioner for Transport under Cap. 374A mentioned above.

49. <u>Mr YIU Si-wing</u> further asked whether any non-franchised buses ("NFBs") which operated on designated routes via government tunnels or control areas had exceeded the legal requirements of 12 meters in length and/or 2.5 meters in width currently. If so, whether the proposed exemption from the requirement to apply for permits for using government tunnels and control areas would be made applicable to these NFBs.

50. <u>ACMP</u> advised that currently no NFB using government tunnels or control areas had exceeded the above mentioned legal requirements. If oversized NFBs came into operation, the NFB operators concerned had to apply for permits for using government tunnels and control areas. <u>USTH</u> supplemented that the current proposal of exemption was confined to franchised buses only.

51. In response to Mr YIU Si-wing's enquiry of whether the operation of oversized franchised buses on designated routes via government tunnels or control areas would form the basis for processing the permits for oversized NFBs which were operated on designated routes within the same government tunnels and control areas, <u>USTH</u> responded in the affirmative. <u>Mr YIU</u> then requested the Administration to consider extending the above proposed exemption to NFBs. <u>Mr POON Siu-ping</u> made the same request and opined that confining the exemption only to franchised buses would be unfair to other operators.

#### Tolls of Lantau Link

52. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> opined that collecting toll for the use of Lantau Link in Tsing Ma Control Area was unfair to the residents of Tung Chung. <u>Mr CHAN</u> expressed that the use of Tsing Ma Bridge (being part of Lantau Link) should be free of charge since the Lantau Link was the only land passageway connecting Lantau and other parts of Hong Kong. <u>Mr CHAN</u> requested the Administration to review the toll collection arrangement for Lantau Link. Sharing Mr CHAN's view, <u>the Chairman</u>, <u>Ms Claudia MO</u> and <u>Ir Dr LO</u> <u>Wai-kwok</u> made similar requests.

53. <u>USTH</u> advised that the tolls of Lantau Link had not been adjusted since it was opened in 1997. The tolls for Lantau Link were set having regard to the following three factors: (a) setting different toll levels for different types of vehicles as appropriate so as to reflect the road space occupied as well as the wear and tear caused on the road by these vehicles; (b) setting a higher toll level for private cars thereby encouraging the use of public transport; and (c) the financial burden on and acceptability of general public, including Tung Chung residents and people working at the Hong Kong International Airport. Taking note of Mr CHAN Han-pan's view, <u>USTH</u> responded that the Administration would review the toll collection arrangement as appropriate. However, the Administration did not have any plan to revise the toll levels of Lantau Link for the time being.

54. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> further requested the Administration to present to this Panel the pros and cons for waiving the toll collection for Lantau Link when the Administration had any plan in this connection. <u>USTH</u> responded that this Panel would be consulted when there was any proposed revision to fees and charges relating to road traffic.

#### Hire Car Services

55. <u>Ms Claudia MO</u> pointed out that Uber would not be able to obtain hire car permit since it could provide the necessary documentary proof to substantiate its application for permit owing to its current mode of operation. <u>Ms MO</u> then urged the Administration to review the relevant policy and legislation, with a view to legalizing the operation of Uber thereby giving people an additional choice of transportation.

56. <u>USTH</u> advised that the existing law had stipulated provisions governing the granting of hire car permit for the use of cars for carriage of passengers for hire or reward. New market entrants of hire car services were welcomed if their mode of operations could fulfill the existing legal requirements. The

Administration would keep in view the market changes with regard to the operation of other modes of transport services and review the relevant policies and regulations as appropriate.

57. In response to Ms Claudia MO's enquiry whether the interests of taxi operators would be one of the major concerns in considering whether to legalize the operation of Uber, <u>USTH</u> responded that in taking forward any review of transport policy and regulation, the Administration would strive to maintain the balance between the interests of different stakeholders and to address the changing market needs for the benefit of the society as a whole.

#### Conclusion

58. In summing up, the <u>Chairman</u> requested the Administration to consider waiving the toll collection for Lantau Link and to review the level of fees/ charges of the items which involved removal of vehicles and impounding vehicles (causing obstruction) as appropriate. <u>The Chairman</u> also requested the Administration to consider extending the proposal of exempting oversized franchised buses from the requirement to apply for permits for using government tunnels and control areas to all other types of commercial vehicles, including NFBs, when the Administration proceed to amend relevant regulations.

# V. Preliminary findings of the toll rationalisation study of three road harbour crossings and three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin

LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(07)	-	Administration's paper on Preliminary findings of the toll rationalisation study of three road harbour crossings and three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin
LC Paper No. CB(4)182/17-18(08)	-	Paperontollrationalisationamong

rationalisation among three road harbour crossings and three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin prepared by

the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

59. At the invitation of the Chairman, <u>USTH</u> briefed members on the preliminary findings of the Transport Department ("TD")'s study on the rationalisation of traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings ("RHCs") and the three land tunnels between Kowloon and Shatin ("the three land tunnels"). With the aid of a powerpoint presentation (LC Paper No. CB(4)208/17-18(02)), <u>Acting Chief Engineer/Transport Planning of Transport Department</u> ("ACE/TP") then briefed members on the current tunnel traffic conditions and the preliminary findings of the study.

(At 12:06 pm, the Chairman proposed and members agreed to extend the meeting to 1:15 pm.)

# Special meeting to receive public views

60. <u>The Chairman suggested and members</u> agreed to hold a special meeting to receive public views on toll rationalisation among the three RHCs and the three land tunnels.

(*Post-meeting note:* With the concurrence of the Chairman, a special meeting was scheduled for 9 January 2018 to receive public views on the above subject. The notice of the special meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)362/17-18 on 13 December 2017. A total of 26 deputations/individuals presented their views at the meeting.)

#### Proposed framework for practicable toll adjustment options

61. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> noted that among the six tunnels in question, only Western Harbour Crossing ("WHC") and the Eagle's Nest Tunnel and Sha Tin Heights Tunnel ("Route 8K") had the spare capacity to absorb traffic diverted from other tunnels. He was of the view that to effectively rationalise the traffic distribution among these six tunnels, the Administration had to ease the congestions on the connecting roads of WHC in Central and the exit of Route 8K near Sha Tin New Town Plaza. <u>Mr LAU Kwok-fan</u> and <u>Mr LUK Chung-hung</u> echoed similar views. <u>Mr LAU</u> objected to any toll increase in Lion Rock Tunnel ("LRT"). In his view, the traffic of LRT would not be diverted to Route 8K due to the serious congestion near Sha Tin New Town Plaza. <u>Mr CHAN</u> <u>Han-pan</u> added that motorists travelling from the New Territories to the eastern part of Hong Kong Island would not switch to use Route 8K and WHC until after the Central-Wan Chai Bypass ("CWB") was commissioned in around end 2018 or early 2019. Thus, the Administration should take into consideration the commissioning of CWB in the toll rationalisation study.

62. <u>USTH</u> noted members' views and responded that TD and Civil Engineering and Development Department had implemented a series of traffic improvement measures to cope with the increase in traffic demand arising from population growth in Sha Tin. Examples of such measures included widening Tai Po Road (Sha Tin section), improving traffic management measures at Shek Mun Interchange, enhancing road markings, relocating bus stops and adjusting traffic light signals along Tai Chung Kiu Road and Sha Tin Wai Road.

63. <u>Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Planning of TD</u> ("AC for T/P") further advised that the CWB, when commissioned, would provide an expressway for east-west traffic in Central and Wan Chai. Vehicles travelling from the Western District to North Point, which accounted for 20% - 25% of the total traffic volume in the northern part of Hong Kong Island, would no longer need to use the existing trunk roads including Connaught Road Central and Gloucester Road, thereby alleviating the traffic congestion on certain connecting roads of WHC. <u>AC for T/P</u> added that the Administration would strive to commence the construction works relating to the widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin section) as early as practicable.

64. <u>Mr LAU Kwok-fan</u> said that the Administration should submit the funding application in respect of the widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin section) to the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Public Works Subcommittee and Finance Committee for endorsement and approval respectively as soon as practicable. In the long run, he called on the Administration to consider constructing a Sha Tin Bypass to divert some of the Kowloon-bound traffic from the North District to Route 8K.

65. Pointing out that the traffic volume of WHC was increasing despite its higher toll levels, <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> considered that the impact of toll increase on motorists' choice of tunnels would be limited. Hence, it would be more feasible for the Administration to lower the tolls than to raise the tolls of certain tunnels in order to influence the choice of motorists and to subsequently rationalise traffic distribution among the six tunnels.

66. <u>Mr Michael TIEN</u> and <u>Mr YIU Si-wing</u> did not subscribe to the suggestions of lowering the toll levels of three RHCs or making the tunnels concerned toll-free, as this might induce additional traffic demand and cause serious traffic congestion on the respective connecting roads. <u>Mr Michael TIEN</u> suggested that the sum of the tunnel tolls of three RHCs for private

vehicles should be maintained at the current level of \$110, of which the tunnel tolls of Cross Harbour Tunnel ("CHT") should be the highest while that of the Eastern Harbour Crossing ("EHC") should be the lowest. <u>ACE/TP</u> responded that the concept suggested by Mr TIEN was theoretically feasible in terms of diverting traffic from CHT to other alternative tunnels. This notwithstanding, <u>ACE/TP</u> stressed that there were many other factors affecting the overall traffic demand and the efficiency of traffic rationalisation.

67. While supporting the view of unifying the tolls of CHT and EHC and lowering those of WHC, Mr YIU Si-wing opined that the tolls of WHC should not be reduced to the same level as that of CHT and EHC so as to avoid paying substantial subsidisation from the public coffers. He therefore suggested that the toll level of CHT and EHC for private vehicles should be unified at \$25 and that of WHC should be set at \$40. Given that the Hong Kong Section of the and Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge would be commissioned in the near future and that might increase the traffic volume of WHC, Mr YIU was of the view that it was not necessary to lower the toll levels of WHC substantially at the moment. He suggested that the toll adjustment option proposed by the Administration should be implemented on a trial basis for one year to assess its impact on the traffic volume of the tunnels concerned.

68. <u>USTH</u> responded that a transport model, which was being developed by TD's consultant, would be used to assess the impact on traffic under different tolling scenarios, and Mr YIU's suggestions would be duly taken into account. The Administration planned to consult the Panel on the proposed toll adjustment options within this legislative session.

69. <u>Mr CHAN Chun-ying</u> opined that the Administration's proposal of charging different toll levels on Sundays and public holidays would have no effect on diverting cross-harbour traffic from CHT and EHC to WHC during the weekday morning peak hours. Referring to the Administration's claim that charging different toll levels at different time periods on weekdays might cause some motorists to speed up or slow down on purpose near the time of change of toll levels to avoid paying higher tolls, which might have an adverse impact on the safety of other tunnel users, <u>Mr CHAN</u> queried if such claim was supported by overseas empirical findings. Further, he suggested adopting a longer buffer period between peak and non-peak hours; within that period the tolls were to be increased/decreased progressively every 15 minutes. In his view, this would reduce the incentive for motorists to speed up or slow down on purpose near the time of toll-level change to avoid paying higher tolls.

70. <u>AC for T/P</u> replied that incremental changes to toll levels within a period between peak and non-peak hours were introduced in some overseas countries implementing electronic toll collection. <u>AC for T/P</u> said that the Administration would consider introducing similar incremental changes to toll levels in the longer term when electronic toll collection was fully implemented in Hong Kong.

Admin 71. At the request of Mr CHAN Chun-ying, <u>AC for T/P</u> undertook to provide the financial statements of the five Government tunnels under the study (i.e. CHT, EHC, WHC, LRT and Route 8K) after the meeting.

72. On Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the implementation timetable for the finalized toll adjustment option, <u>Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)3</u> ("DS(T)3") advised that having considered the views of the members and other stakeholders on the proposed framework as well as the preliminary outcome of discussion with WHC franchisee on any subsidisation arrangements, the Administration planned to consult members on the specific toll adjustment proposals within this legislative session. <u>DS(T)3</u> said that adjusting the tolls of Government tunnels would require amendments to subsidiary legislation subject to negative vetting by the LegCo. If there was community consensus and with the support from members, <u>DS(T)3</u> believed that it would not take too long before the toll adjustments could be implemented.

73. In reply to Mr CHU Hoi-dick's enquiry, <u>AC for T/P</u> replied that the Administration did not set any targets regarding the total traffic demand of the three RHCs and the tunnel traffic volumes of private cars, motorcycles and taxis. He stressed that the aim of the study was to shorten the overall time required for using the RHCs.

Tolls of WHC and subsidisation arrangement

74. <u>Dr KWOK Ka-ki</u> disagreed to the Administration's proposal to reduce the tolls of WHC and increase the tolls of other alternative tunnels. He was concerned that the congestion problem near both ends of WHC would be further aggravated as more private vehicles or motorcycles might be attracted to use WHC following the toll reduction. In this regard, he considered that toll subsidisation should be provided to public transport vehicles only so as to encourage the use of public transport. <u>Dr KWOK</u> called on the Administration to conduct detailed assessment on the traffic implications of the proposed toll reduction at WHC.

75. <u>USTH</u> pointed out that according to the preliminary findings of the study, it was necessary to suitably increase the tolls of CHT and LRT while reducing

the tolls of their alternative tunnels at the same time, so as to effectively divert the traffic of CHT and LRT without inducing additional traffic demand. To achieve traffic rationalisation effectively, toll adjustment should focus on private cars, motorcycles and taxis, as these types of vehicles contributed to about 73% of the total tunnel traffic volume. <u>USTH</u> further advised that taking into account the views of members, the Administration would devise specific toll adjustment options for further consultation with members within this legislative session.

76. <u>Ms Claudia MO</u> criticized the findings of the toll rationalisation study lacking in new initiatives and considered it a waste of public money. She expressed dissatisfaction with the Administration's pre-defined framework under which providing subsidisation from the public coffers was the only means to lower the tolls of WHC.

77. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> asked for the subsidisation amount to be paid from the public coffers to the WHC franchisee. <u>Mr POON Siu-ping</u> enquired if the Administration had any backup plan in the event that an agreement on subsidisation arrangements could not be reached with the WHC franchisee. <u>Dr</u> <u>KWOK Ka-ki</u> expressed grave concern that the subsidisation amount could be sky-high if such amount was to be calculated based on the statutory toll levels. <u>Dr KWOK</u> and <u>Ms Claudia MO</u> called on the Administration to seriously consider buying back WHC.

78. <u>USTH</u> responded that the Administration had commenced initial discussion with the WHC franchisee and no concrete proposals on the subsidisation arrangement and amount had been agreed upon at this stage. More in-depth negotiations with the WHC franchisee would be entered into after gauging the views of members and other stakeholders on the proposed framework. <u>USTH</u> added that the Administration currently did not have any plan to buy back WHC.

79.  $\underline{DS(T)3}$  further advised that the aim of the study was to alleviate cross-harbour traffic congestion problem (in particular to non-tunnel traffic) through rationalising traffic distribution among the six tunnels. To better utilize the capacity of WHC, the Administration proposed to provide appropriate subsidisation so that the actual tolls payable by motorists using WHC could be lowered and hence more traffic would be diverted to WHC. In this connection, the Government's ownership of WHC was not a prerequisite for effecting the toll adjustments. As compared with providing subsidisation,  $\underline{DS(T)3}$  pointed out that buying back WHC would involve more complicated issues such as the calculation of the asset value of WHC, rendering the discussion with the WHC franchisee even more difficult.

80. <u>Mr YIU Si-wing</u> considered that the Government should put forward a concrete proposal on subsidisation arrangements for discussion with the WHC franchisee to avoid inviting criticisms of collusion between the Government and the business sector during the discussion process. <u>USTH</u> noted Mr YIU's view.

81. <u>Dr Helena WONG</u> pointed out that traffic queues were found at the entrance of WHC southbound even at non-peak hours of the day, which was different from the information provided by the Administration in its paper. <u>AC for T/P</u> replied that since the average weekday morning peak-hour traffic demand for WHC was about 90% of its design capacity, it was possible that traffic queues were occasionally observed at the exit/entrance of WHC. The relevant Area Traffic Control section would adjust the traffic signals near the exit of WHC in the Western District as and when necessary with a view to easing the congestion on the connecting roads.

# Toll concession for public transport services

82. <u>Mr Jeremy TAM</u> urged the Administration to consider aligning the tolls of three RHCs for the return trip of empty taxis. <u>Mr TAM</u> held the view that such alignment would help to alleviate the congestion problem at CHT and its connecting roads, which currently offered the lowest toll for the return trip of empty taxis, and could to a certain extent solve the problem of refusal of hire for cross-harbour service.

83. <u>USTH</u> took note of Mr TAM's comment and responded that the Administration would consider the need to consult the transport trade, including the taxi industry, in formulating different toll adjustment options.

84. Noting that the Administration did not propose to increase tunnel tolls for fixed route public transport vehicles, <u>Mr Jeremy TAM</u> asked if the Administration would consider waiving the tunnel tolls on public buses, so as to reduce the operating costs of the routes concerned, making room for fare reduction and thus encouraging the use of public transport. Sharing similar views, <u>Mr LAU Kwok-fan</u> suggested lowering EHC and WHC tolls on public buses to align with those of CHT, and lowering Tate's Cairn Tunnel and Tai Lam Tunnel tolls on public buses to align with those of LRT.

85. <u>USTH</u> replied that an established mechanism was in place to review franchised bus fares, and the tolls for RHCs only accounted for a small portion of the total operating cost of franchised bus operators concerned. Nevertheless, he undertook to take into account Mr Jeremy TAM's views in formulating the toll adjustment proposals.

86. Conveying the views of the Motor Transport Workers General Union, <u>Mr</u> <u>LUK Chung-hung</u> said that the Administration should consider unifying the tolls of or narrowing the toll differences among the three RHCs to avoid inducing unnecessary traffic demand and reducing carbon emissions. Furthermore, he called on the Administration to enter into agreements with the operators of public transport services, so that after the Administration adjusted downwards or removed the tunnel tolls for fixed-route public transport services, the operators would be required to reduce the fares so as to ease the burden of travelling expenses on the public. <u>Mr LUK</u> indicated that he would move a motion in this regard.

# Alternative suggestions to rationalise traffic distribution

87. <u>Dr Helena WONG</u> asked if the Administration would study the feasibility of increasing the capacities of tunnel tubes of CHT and LRT by constructing an additional traffic lane. In response, <u>AC for T/P</u> said that it would be difficult to find enough space to construct an additional traffic lane inside CHT and LRT respectively. Furthermore, the Administration had to consider whether the connecting roads of these tunnels had the spare capacities to absorb additional traffic demand generated by the new traffic lane.

88. <u>Ms Tanya CHAN</u> asked whether the Administration would consider constructing a new RHC. <u>AC for T/P</u> advised that subject to the final recommendations of the planning study "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" jointly commissioned by the Development Bureau and the Planning Department in respect of the long-term land use development in Hong Kong, as well as the future findings of the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030", the Administration would examine the feasibility of constructing a fourth RHC at an appropriate time.

# Other views

89. <u>Mr CHAN Han-pan</u> opined that the study on the rationalisation of traffic distribution among the six tunnels was a delaying tactic adopted by the Administration to tackle the traffic congestion problem in Hong Kong. He opined that the study should also cover Tai Lam Tunnel so as to obviate the need to conduct another consultancy study when its franchise expired in 2025. <u>Mr LAU Kwok-fan</u> shared the same view that the toll adjustment proposals should cover Tai Lam Tunnel, with a view to encouraging vehicles commuting between the North District and Hong Kong Island to use WHC.

90. <u>USTH</u> responded that considering that the aim of the study was to resolve the cross-harbour traffic congestion problem, and majority of the cross-harbour road traffic also used one of the three land tunnels, the study mainly focused on the six tunnels concerned. Upon successful implementation of the toll adjustment proposal and if there was consensus in the community, the Administration could consider including other tunnels in any future study.

91. <u>Mr WU Chi-wai</u> commented that the Administration failed to examine different factors, other than toll levels, that might influence motorists' choice of tunnels in the study and also did not provide justifications for ruling out other alternatives to toll adjustment in achieving traffic rationalisation among the tunnels. He also expressed dissatisfaction over the Administration's failure to assess the impact of removing all toll booths on the traffic flow of the tunnels concerned. He considered that the toll rationalisation study mainly paved the way for the future toll increase at CHT and LRT.

92. <u>Mr LUK Chung-hung</u> considered the transport infrastructure planning in Hong Kong was not forward-looking enough to cater for future development. Separately, he called on the Administration to consider opening up access to the transport data used for calibrating the transport model, so as to facilitate different organizations in the community to conduct relevant analysis and furnish ideas and insights for the Administration's consideration.

93. Recalling that discussions by LegCo Members on toll adjustments of RHCs could be dated back to 2008 and eventually the Government decided to shelve the toll adjustment trial scheme in 2014, <u>Ms Tanya CHAN</u> expressed concern on when the measures to rationalise traffic distribution among the three RHCs could be finalized.

94. <u>USTH</u> explained that having regard to the then traffic situations at CHT and EHC, the diverse views of the public over the proposed toll adjustment options and concerns of the relevant districts over the possible traffic congestion caused by the diverted traffic, the Government decided to put in abeyance the toll adjustment trial scheme in 2014. <u>USTH</u> said that the targeted commissioning of CWB around end 2018 or early 2019 would be an opportune time for implementing a more comprehensive strategy to rationalise the traffic distribution among RHCs.

95. <u>Mr CHU Hoi-dick</u> noted that the annual growth rate of motorcycles and private cars was about 4%, and that the cumulative growth rate till 2021 should be about 17%. He queried why the projections on traffic demand in 2021 as set out in page 6 of the powerpoint presentation material only represented an

approximately 5% increase over the current traffic demand. <u>AC for T/P</u> responded that notwithstanding the fact that the average combined annual growth rate of motorcycles and private cars amounted to 3% to 4% in the past decade, the annual growth rate of these types of vehicles in total tunnel traffic volume was only about 1% to 2%.

96. <u>Mr CHU Hoi-dick</u> requested the Administration to disclose the full report of the preliminary findings of the study, including the transport data used, in order to facilitate members' discussion at the forthcoming public hearing. <u>Mr CHU</u> considered it essential for members to learn about the data used in the study and the methodology in formulating the toll adjustment proposals in the course of assessing the proposals. <u>AC for T/P</u> responded that the data collected by the consultant has not been fully compiled yet and that the figures presented and projections made on page 5 and page 6 of the powerpoint presentation material were based on transport data currently available.

97. <u>Dr CHENG Chung-tai</u> considered the Administration's explanation unacceptable. He questioned how the Administration could come up with the proposed framework on toll adjustment proposals if the data used by the consultant was not ready to be disclosed. He further queried the basis of the Administration's assessment that significant additional traffic demand could be induced if all or some of the six tunnels were made toll-free.

98. <u>USTH</u> explained that a two-stage approach was adopted in taking forward the toll rationalisation study. In the first stage, the consultant collected data through traffic surveys and used big data to supplement traffic survey results to calibrate the transport model. Taking into account the views of members and other stakeholders, the model would be used for assessing the effects on traffic conditions under different tolling scenarios. In the second stage, specific toll adjustment proposals would be formulated based on such assessments and their impacts on tunnel traffic, economy, environment and so forth would be further examined.

99. <u>Dr CHENG Chung-tai</u> remained unconvinced. He was of the view that all the six tunnels should be made toll-free when all of them became Government tunnels in 2023, so that the community as a whole could be benefited. He expressed that the Administration should consider means other than toll adjustment to influence motorists' choice of tunnels in order to rationalise traffic distribution among these tunnels.

100. Sharing Mr CHU Hoi-dick's view, <u>Mr CHAN Chi-chuen</u> opined that the Administration's paper was too brief as it did not provide information such as justifications and assumptions behind the reasoning, in particular how the

Administration came up with the conclusions from the preliminary assessments mentioned in the paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper.

101. <u>The Chairman</u> was of the view that it would be more appropriate for members to critically examine the data applied in the transport model and the assumptions adopted by the Government at the time when specific toll adjustment options were put forward by the Government for consultation.

# <u>Motions</u>

102. <u>The Chairman</u> decided that, in view of the insufficient meeting time and the absence of a quorum, the motion and the amendment motion raised by members at this meeting would be dealt with in the next regular meeting.

(*Post-meeting note:* The wording of the motion and the amendment motion raised by Mr LUK Chung-hung and Ms Tanya CHAN respectively [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)235/17-18(01) to (02)] were issued to members on 20 November 2017.)

# VI. Any other business

103. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:14 pm.

Council Business Division 4 <u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u> 8 March 2018