

立法會

Legislative Council

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by the Administration and
cleared with the Chairman)

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LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs and LegCo Panel on Transport

Minutes of Joint Meeting held on Wednesday, 4 July 2001, at 9:00 am in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Members of the LegCo Panel on Transport

- * Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
- * Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
- * Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
- * Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
- * Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- * Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

Prof Hon NG Ching-fai (Chairman)
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung

(* Also members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs)

Members absent : Members of the LegCo Panel on Transport

Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Public officers attending : **Agenda Item II**

Environment and Food Bureau

Mr Thomas CHOW
Deputy Secretary

Mr Howard CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary

Transport Bureau

Mr Brian LO
Principal Assistant Secretary

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Elvis AU
Assistant Director (Environment Assessment & Noise)

Mr K S CHAN
Principal Environmental Protection Officer

Highways Department

Mr C S WAI
Assistant Director (Headquarters)

Transport Department

Mr S M LI
Assistant Commissioner (Urban)

Agenda Item III

Environment and Food Bureau

Mr Thomas CHOW
Deputy Secretary

Mr Howard CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary

Transport Bureau

Mr Brian LO
Principal Assistant Secretary

Environmental Protection Department

Mr C W TSE
Assistant Director (Air)

Mr W C MOK
Principal Environmental Protection Officer

Transport Department

Mr Thomas THUMB
Assistant Commissioner (Transport Planning)

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

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I. Election of Chairman

In the absence of a quorum at the time when the joint meeting started, members agreed that the meeting should begin as a meeting of the Transport Panel until a quorum for the joint meeting was attained. Mrs Miriam LAU therefore took the chair.

II. Measures to address noise impact of existing roads

(LC Paper No.CB(1)1664/00-01(01) - Information paper provided by the Administration;

LC Paper No. CB(1)1664/00-01(02) - Extract of minutes of meeting between LegCo Members and Kowloon City District Council on 12 April 2001; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1554/00-01(01) - Noise impact of roads in Kowloon City District)

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food (DS for E&F) briefed members on the Administration's response to the issues raised by members at the last joint meeting on 7 February 2001 and the outcome of the Administration's consultation with the District Councils on the new policy to address noise impact of existing roads as set out in LC Paper No CB(1) 1664/00-01(01).

Retrofitting programme

3. Some members expressed grave concern about the slow progress in the implementation of the retrofitting programme. They requested the Administration to speed up the programme. Apart from the 29 existing roads which had been identified for retrofitting, they also enquired about the remedial arrangements for the remaining roads which were exposed to high noise levels.

4. DS for E&F replied that based on the guiding principles under the new policy to address the noise impact of existing roads, the Administration had identified 29 existing roads for retrofitting. Construction works were planned to be completed in phases over the next 10 years. Regarding the remaining excessively noisy roads, the Administration would consider other non-engineering solutions to address the noise impact of roads on nearby residents. Retrofitting works would be proposed if they met the guiding principles under the new policy. Assistant Director of Highways (Headquarters) (AD/Hy) added that the proposed timetable for retrofitting as set out in paragraph 4 of the paper was only a tentative one. The Administration would try to speed up the programme as far as possible upon completion of the detailed feasibility studies. In this regard, Miss Emily LAU requested the Administration to provide an updated implementation timetable for the programme.

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Low noise resurfacing programme

5. Mr LAU Kong-wah pointed out that since retrofitting of barriers and enclosures were considered not practicable in most of the cases, the Administration should speed up the low noise resurfacing programme and take advantage of synchronizing the resurfacing works with other nearby public works.

6. AD of Hy advised that the works involved in a resurfacing programme were comparable to those of a minor reconstruction programme. The feasibility of a resurfacing programme would be subject to detailed examination, including traffic impact assessment studies and other engineering-related studies. As such, it took time for the Administration to implement the programme. Where possible, the Administration would take advantage of synchronizing the works with other planned utility works in the areas.

Implementation of traffic management measures to address traffic noise problem

7. On the implementation of traffic management measures to address traffic noise problem, Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Urban) (AC for T (Urban)) advised that the Transport Department was liaising with the relevant departments including the Police and Environment Protection Department with a view to finalizing the potential roads sections for a trial. So far, five sections of roads had been identified for full closure or partial closure for certain types of vehicles at nights. Details of the proposed programme were as follows:

- (a) full closure of East Kowloon Corridor;
- (b) full closure of Texaco Road Flyover in Tsuen Wan;
- (c) full closure of Kwai Chung Road Flyover outside Kwai Fong Estate;
- (d) banning of lorries along Po Lam Road between Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O; and
- (e) banning of lorries along Ngan Shing Street in Sha Tin.

Once the Administration had finalized the potential road sections for a trial, it would consult the relevant District Councils and trade before it proceeded with the trials. The Transport Department and Environmental Protection Department would then conduct surveys and assess the potential noise benefit from the trial schemes.

8. Mr Albert CHAN Wai-yip and Miss Emily LAU indicated their support to the proposed implementation of the trial schemes. Miss Emily LAU however remarked that as the proposed trials were only focusing on a number of noisy roads and taking into account the lead time required for conducting proper consultation before implementation, it could not immediately help address the noise problems faced by residents. As an alternative, the Administration should consider providing indirect technical remedies in the form of good quality windows and air-conditioners. In this regard, residents living right beside excessively noisy flyovers should be given priority.

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9. DS for E&F replied that apart from the five road sections as mentioned, the Administration would continue to explore the feasibility of extending the scheme to other excessively noisy roads where practicable. Whilst it took time for the Administration to conduct proper consultation to balance the interests of motorists and residents, it was not necessary to take a few years time to implement the trials.

10. On the provision of noise insulation, DS for E&F replied that it was a passive method and very costly. Moreover, it would not be seen to be fair to provide noise insulation to some of the affected residential units but not those one floor below them despite that their eligibility would be based on an objective assessment of the noise level. With a total of approximately 300 000 residential units affected by excessive traffic noise, the liability on the public purse to provide insulation would be substantial. Even if 75 dB(A) above was used as a criterion to determine the eligibility for installation, there would still be 187 000 affected residential units and the financial commitment would be in the region of \$10 billion assuming an average cost of \$50,000 per residential unit, without counting recurrent and replacement expenditure. The more cost effective remedy was to mitigate the problem at source. For those roads which were not technically feasible to mitigate at source, the Administration would need to consider the possibility of non-engineering solutions in the short term and rely on urban renewal in the longer term to address the noise problems.

11. Miss Emily LAU remarked that the Administration should feel ashamed of the fact that more than 187 000 affected resident units were exposed to traffic noise limit of 75 dB(A) above. She was disappointed to note that her suggestion was not accepted by the Administration and urged the Administration to reconsider her request. DS for E&F noted the member's view and said that practical measures were being adopted by the Administration to address the noise problem.

Admin 12. Miss Emily LAU asked to what extent local residents would benefit from the implementation of traffic management measures to address traffic noise problem. In this regard, she also requested the Administration to provide the implementation programme for the remainders of roads which were presently not included in the planned programme but exposed to high noise levels. DS/E&F undertook to provide further information at the next joint meeting.

Policy on urban renewal

13. Mr Albert CHAN opined that there was a need to rely on urban renewal to address the noise problem. However, in determining the priority for urban renewal projects, noise pollution alone would not be the prime factor for consideration by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). Unless a suitable policy was formulated by the Administration with the necessary financial support, it would take a very long time to resolve the noise problem through this channel.

14. DS for E&F replied that urban renewal was aimed at improving the overall environment including noise pollution suffered by residents. In putting forward

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individual projects, the Administration had already adopted the existing noise limit of 70 dB(A) for the planning of new roads and new developments.

15. Mr Albert CHAN was not convinced of the Administration's reply. He said that the Administration should revise the criteria for determining the priority for urban renewal projects with due regard to the level of impact of existing traffic noise on near-by residents. Mr TAM Yiu-chung also opined that there was a need to rely on urban renewal in the longer term to address the noise problems. Areas prone to traffic noise should be given priority. At members' request, DS for E&F undertook to discuss with the relevant bureaux on what URA could do in this respect and report at the next joint meeting.

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West Kowloon Corridor and East Kowloon Corridor

16. Referring to the traffic noise problem at West Kowloon Corridor and East Kowloon Corridor, Miss Emily LAU enquired how affected residents could benefit from the proposed noise mitigation measures. AC for T (Urban) replied that a trial was conducted last year to ban lorries from using West Kowloon Corridor at nights. However, the scheme was found to be not successful for two reasons. Firstly, the banning of lorries along West Kowloon Corridor had aggravated the traffic noise problem at Lai Chi Kok Road. Secondly, there were enforcement problems as reported by traffic police. As an alternative, speeding enforcement cameras were now being investigated for installation along West Kowloon Corridor to combat excessive noise generated by speeding. The Principal Environmental Protection Officer also advised that the measure to minimize speeding could help reduce the noise level by about one dB(A).

17. Noting the Administration's reply, Miss Emily LAU pointed out that the proposed measure was not effective in relieving the nuisance caused to residents. DS/E&F replied that the Administration was making every effort to address the noise problem in a practical manner. In the long term, the problem could only be resolved by means of urban renewal. Miss Emily LAU reiterated that air-conditioning and double-glazed windows should be provided to minimize the suffering of residents. The Chairman also suggested the Administration to adopt a basket of criteria in determining whether good quality window and air-conditioner should be provided to affected resident units which were prone to excessive traffic noise. Mr TAM Yiu-chung remarked that air-conditioners might not be welcome by elderly people, not to mention the additional burden on electricity tariff.

18. Ir Dr Raymond HO remarked that the widespread use of pre-cast components in highway projects might be one of the reasons why flyovers were built with numerous expansion joints which caused excessive traffic noise. He asked if in the construction of highways, insitu construction could be used instead of pre-cast components. He also asked if an asphalt layer could be added on top of the expansion joints on flyovers to reduce noise.

19. AD/Hy explained that due to tight implementation programme and the need to

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minimize traffic disruption during construction stages, pre-cast components might be required. However, the Administration would try to minimize the number of joints on flyovers as far as possible. Under the existing policy, new flyovers would be paved with asphalt instead of concrete. However for existing flyovers, it would be difficult to add an asphalt layer on top of the joints. Indeed, various methods had been tested but were proved to be not effective.

20. Ir Dr Raymond HO opined that erection of noise barriers might not be an effective means in reducing traffic noise. Apart from creating visual intrusion, it also created air ventilation problem in both ends of the barriers. He suggested the Administration to explore using other noise absorption materials or to locate housing developments away from noise sensitive areas at planning stage.

21. DS/E&F noted the member's views and replied that the Administration would pay due regard to the need for aesthetic design as far as possible. Natural scenery such as slopes and trees would be used instead of physical barriers where possible. Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Environment Assessment & Noise) added that noise barriers were effective means in reducing traffic noise ranging from 5 dB(A) to 15 dB(A). The Administration would take into account all relevant factors including potential air quality problems during detailed design and consult relevant DCs as appropriate.

Planning standard

22. Mr CHENG Kar foo opined that the Administration should adopt a flexible approach to provide enhanced noise mitigation measures where technically and financially viable. He referred to a recent Public Works Subcommittee submission whereby the Administration refused to provide enhanced noise mitigation measures along the section of Wan Po Road as the projected noise impact at all affected dwellings could be kept at a level not exceeding 70 dB(A) with the proposed mitigation measures in place. However, given that the noise level at these dwellings was close to 70dB(A), the noise level could be further reduced to below 65 dB(A) if enhanced mitigation measures were provided under the road improvement works project. Against this background, he opined that it was high time for the Administration to review whether 70 dB(A) should be used as a criteria for the planning of improvement works to existing roads. As the subject matter fell outside the scope of the present item, the Chairman agreed to discuss the item at the next joint meeting scheduled for November 2001. DS/E&F undertook to provide further information to account for the existing policy. Miss Emily LAU also requested the Administration to provide information on details of complaints or objections received from various sources against excessive traffic noise above 70 dB(A).

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23. The Chairman concluded that the Panels would re-address the issue in November 2001 and the Administration was requested to provide further information as requested by members at the meeting.

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III. Progress of vehicle emission control technology and measures

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1664/00-01(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

24. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Air) (AD of EP (A)) and DS/E&F briefed members on the latest advancement in vehicle emission control technology and the progress of various emission control measures being implemented in Hong Kong as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1) 1664/00-01(03).

Retrofitting of particulate traps and diesel catalysts

25. Referring to paragraph 21 of the paper, Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed concern about the low response rate from motorists for installing particulate traps and diesel catalysts on their vehicles. DS/E&F replied that the retrofit program would end in October 2001. So far, out of the 40 000 pre-Euro light diesel vehicles, about 14 200 had been equipped with suitable particulate traps or catalysts. Another 8 900 diesel taxis had been switched to liquefied petroleum gas taxis. The Administration would remind the eligible vehicle owners about the retrofit program and its plan to introduce legislation to make the installation a mandatory requirement.

26. Mr Bernard CHAN enquired about the Government's attitude towards private sector initiative in recommending environmentally-friendly products to the Administration. Citing the F2-21 gasoline enhancer as an example, which was widely used in Singapore as an effective and economical fuel additive for alleviating urban transport-related air pollution problems, he asked if Government would take an active role in searching successful products in other overseas countries for local use.

27. AD of EP(A) replied that the Administration would identify suitable products in the market for further investigation as was the case for identifying suitable diesel catalysts for local use. It would also maintain regular dialogue with the relevant trades with a view to receiving latest product information available in the market. Regarding F2-21 gasoline enhancer, he confirmed that it was one of the products under testing.

28. Prof. NG Ching-fai also pointed out that as new technologies were introduced in the market from time to time, he asked whether Government would be prepared to organize seminars to receive briefings by individual companies. AD of EP(A) replied that representatives of individual companies would be received by appropriate officers in the departments. The Administration would examine the characteristics of the recommended products. Where appropriate, further product tests would be arranged in collaboration with the transport trades.

29. Noting that Citybus Limited had just commenced a depot trial of running a prototype air-conditioned double-deck trolleybus converted from an existing diesel bus, Mr Tommy CHEUNG enquired whether Government would assist the company to arrange a pilot scheme to gain on-road service experience. The Principal Assistant

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Secretary for Transport advised that the Administration had been in contact with Citybus on the progress of the depot trial and would examine the results of the trial when they were available. On-road service trial might be arranged having considered all financial, technical and legal issues. Prof. NG Ching-fai opined that in order to encourage the introduction of new technologies in Hong Kong, Government should provide the necessary incentives and support to the industries.

30. Referring to paragraph 23 of the paper, Miss Emily LAU urged the Administration to speed up the retrofit program for pre-Euro large diesel vehicles. DS/E&F noted the member's views.

Air Quality

31. Miss Emily LAU opined that the air quality standards adopted by Hong Kong were much lower than other foreign countries. She noticed that the Administration had recently reviewed the air quality standards in Hong Kong and requested the Administration to disclose the findings of the review for members' information.

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32. DS/E&F replied that in determining the air quality standards in Hong Kong, the Administration would make reference to overseas practices. At present, the authorities in USA and Europe were reviewing their air quality standards. The Administration would re-address the subject matter, pending completion of the on-going reviews in USA and Europe which were scheduled for completion in 2002-3. Notwithstanding the reply, Miss Emily LAU requested the Administration to disclose the findings of the review for members' information.

Admin

33. Regarding the implementation of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) public light buses in Hong Kong, DS/E&F replied that the Administration was still examining the matter. It would determine on the way forward before the end of 2001. Mr CHENG Kar foo requested the Administration to brief members on the subject matter in due course.

34. Mr LAU Ping-cheung was concerned whether sufficient garages were in place for the repair and maintenance of LPG vehicles. Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment and Food replied that market forces would ensure that there would be sufficient garages in the market to serve LPG vehicles. At present, 16 LPG vehicle workshops had been established for the repair and maintenance of parts related to the fuel system of an LPG vehicle. He expected that more LPG vehicle workshops would be set up as market demand grew. The LPG vehicle workshops were subject to stringent control by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department.

IV. Any other business

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

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15 November 2001