

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(1)771/02-03
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 18 October 2002, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
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 LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Non-Panel members : Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
attending Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai

Members absent : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

- Public Officers attending** : Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
- Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works (Transport and Works)
- Ms Ernestina WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works (Transport and Works)
- Highways Department
- Mr Norman MAK
Acting Deputy Project Manager/Major Works
- Transport Department
- Mr Y T SO
Chief Engineer/Strategic Roads
- Attendance by invitation** : Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited
- Mr Gary K H LUK
General Manager
- Ms Anita LEE
Corporate Communications Manager
- Hong Kong Port & Maritime Board
- Sir Gordon Y S WU, KCMG, FICE
Chairman
- Mr Leo K K LEUNG
Assistant to Sir Gordon WU
- Civic Exchange Limited
- Mr Winston CHU Ka-sun
Director
- Ms Dodo WONG Wai-ming
Assistant to Mr Winston CHU

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

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

Mr Joey LO
Assistant Secretary(1)1

Action

I Route 10

The Chairman recapitulated that the Panel held a series of meetings between October 2001 and January 2002 to discuss the Administration's proposal for the Route 10 project, together with the Shenzhen Western Corridor (SWC) and Deep Bay Link (DBL). It also invited views from various bodies and members of the public, and organized a series of public hearings together with the concerned parties to discuss the three projects. The Administration informed members in November 2001 that having regard to the public views and the latest circumstances, the Administration revised the alignment of the section of Route 10 between North Lantau and So Kwun Wat (the Southern Section) which was gazetted under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) in July 2000. The revised alignment of the Southern Section was gazetted on 28 June 2002 and the objection period had already expired. Regarding the section of Route 10 between So Kwun Wat and Yuen Long Highway (the Northern Section), the funding proposal for its detailed design was not approved by the Finance Committee at its meeting held on 8 March 2002. The Administration indicated that it would continue to monitor the traffic situation and keep in view its implementation plan. According to the result of the 2001/02 Strategic Highway Project Review, the Northern Section would not be required until 2010/11. A background brief prepared by the Secretariat was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)58/02-03.

2. The Chairman invited members to note the following written submissions from individuals/organizations:

- (a) Action Group against Route 10 and Deep Bay Link (revised version) circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1)55/02-03(03);
- (b) Tai Lam Chung Tsuen circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1)78/02-03(01);
- (c) A joint submission from Mr K K WONG, Member of Hong Kong Airport Authority and Professor Richard WONG, The University of Hong Kong circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1)78/02-03(02); and

Action

- (d) Chairman of MTR Corporation Limited (The letter was tabled at the meeting and circulated to members after the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB(1)108/02-03(02).)

3. The Chairman said that the meeting was convened to enable members and the deputations to express views on Route 10 Southern Section at the earliest opportunity before funding proposal was put forward to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for consideration.

Views presented by deputations

Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited
[LC Paper No. CB(1)2477/01-02(02)]

4. Mr Gary LUK, General Manager of Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited, said that the Company objected to the construction of the Southern Section in advance of a review for the entire Route 10. Such a review should take into account changes in planning parameters since 1999, including the reduction of forecast population in North West New Territories (NWNT), vehicle fleet numbers, and cross boundary vehicular traffic as well as the findings of the on-going study on the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link.

5. Mr LUK also queried the need and cost-effectiveness of Route 10 and the reliability of traffic forecasts prepared by the Administration. Given that the design capacity of Tuen Mun Road-cum-Route 3 Country Park Section (Route 3) was 280 000, they should have sufficient capacity to cater for the forecast increase in traffic, bearing in mind the present daily traffic on these two routes were only about 150 000. On cross boundary traffic, he said that according to the Mainland authority responsible for the planning of SWC, during the initial opening of SWC, the daily traffic forecast of SWC would be 22 000 and traffic vide Lok Ma Chau would be reduced from 25 000 to 15 000. In other words, the forecast cross boundary traffic cited by the Mainland authority was significantly lower than that of the Administration. Even under the high growth scenario in year 2015, the forecast traffic at SWC and Lok Ma Chau were only 44 000 and 27 000 respectively. With these traffic forecasts, Route 3 should have spare capacity to absorb the demand so generated.

6. Given the fiscal deficit faced by the Government, Mr LUK opined that Government should critically review the need for Route 10, taking into account Government's policy to promote private sector initiative in infrastructural development. It should also examine measures to achieve traffic diversion between Tuen Mun Road and Route 3 with a view to maximizing the utilization of scarce road resources.

Action

Sir Gordon WU, KCMG, FICE
[LC Paper No. CB(1)55/02-03(01)]

7. Sir Gordon WU expressed his objection to the proposed construction of Tsing Lung Bridge. He said that Tsing Lung Bridge was not an effective alternative link to the airport as the airport would remain inaccessible in case of closure of the North Lantau Highway. Route 10 was outdated due to the change in planning parameters. The Green Island Link was removed. The sites originally earmarked for container terminals 10 and 11 were lost to the development of the Hong Kong Disneyland project. Various modifications had been made to the original alignment upon gazettal in July 2000. Given the budget deficit faced by Government, there was a need to critically review the cost-effectiveness of individual project and re-prioritize the infrastructural programme taking into account the wider benefit of the community and possible port development in North-west Lantau. He said that the Administration was commissioning a consultancy study to identify potential sites for new container terminal. Without ascertaining the location of the future port facilities and the outcome of the on-going study on the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link, it was premature to proceed with the Tsing Lung Bridge project. In taking forward infrastructural development projects in Hong Kong, the Administration should focus on whether the projects would bring about substantial benefits to the policy objective of developing Hong Kong into a logistics hub. Instead of proceeding with the Tsing Lung Bridge project, the Administration should speed up the implementation of a direct and all-weather-proof trestle bridge-cum-tunnel link between Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok.

Civic Exchange Limited
[LC Paper No. CB(1)55/02-03(02)]

8. Mr Winston CHU Ka-sun of Civic Exchange Limited said that Civil Exchange was of the view that due to major changes in planning, including the deletion of the Hong Kong Lantau Link from the original blueprint of Route 10 and the loss of the sites originally earmarked for container terminals 10 and 11 to the development of the Hong Kong Disneyland, the whole concept of Route 10 needed to be reviewed. Taking into account the future development of port facilities in Hong Kong and overall benefits of Hong Kong, Government should re-examine the costs and benefits of the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok link vis-à-vis the Tsing Lung Bridge. He stressed that in order to compete with Yantian port, additional infrastructure must be provided to enable Hong Kong port to capture the cargo flow generated in the western part of Pearl River Delta (PRD). The Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link would significantly enhance the connectivity of the future Lantau container port, particularly in conjunction with the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link. It however required further studies on its environmental impacts. The proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link was also a direct and all-weather-proof trestle bridge-cum-tunnel link between Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok. It also saved the need for the Administration to spend an additional sum of about \$7 billion for the widening of North Lantau Highway to cope with the associated

Action

increase in traffic. A possible railway link could also be provided to link West Rail with the Airport Railway and to Macau/PRD.

9. Mr CHU further said that against the financial difficulties faced by Government with a projected budget deficit of \$60 - 70 billion in 2002-2003, there was no urgency to press for the implementation of Route 10, which was not cost-effective at all. The Administration should review the need and timing for Route 10 and other alternative transport link, taking into account the cost-effectiveness of the projects, the impact of the commissioning of West Rail on Route 10, the location of future port facilities and the outcome of the proposed construction of Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link.

10. A set of presentation materials provided by Civil Exchange Limited tabled at the meeting was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)108/02-03(03).

Views presented by the Administration

(LC Paper No. CB(1)55/02-03(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration with responses to comments on the key issues raised by the Action Group Against Route 10 and Deep Bay Link and Route 3 (CPS) Company; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)78/02-03(03) - Supplementary note provided by the Administration in response to the submissions from Sir Gordon WU, Civic Exchange Limited and Tai Lam Chung Tsuen)

11. The Acting Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (DPM/MW (Ag.)) briefed members on the latest position of Route 10. He said that having regard to the public views expressed and the latest circumstances, the Administration had revised the alignment of the section of Route 10 Southern Section gazetted under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance in July 2000. The revised alignment was presented to the Panel in November 2001 and subsequently gazetted on 28 June 2002. The Administration was in the process of resolving the 1 580 objections against the gazetted scheme of the Route 10 Southern Section received during the objection period. A majority of these objections were lodged by residents of the Palatial Coast in Siu Lam (1 183 objections) and villagers at Fuk Hang Tsuen (217 objections). The remaining objections were lodged by residents from various other locations and other parties. The proposed road works and the objections received would be considered by the Chief Executive in Council in due course.

12. Regarding the latest position of the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link, the Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport and Works) (DS for ETW) said that a consensus was reached between the Hong Kong Government and the Mainland authorities to conduct a joint study on issues relating to the Hong Kong - Pearl River West Link. The Administration would follow up with the State

Action

Development Planning Commission on the way forward. The Administration would also examine the supporting infrastructure including the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link.

Changes to the committed/planned developments undertaken by the Administration

13. Whilst appreciating the merits of the revised blueprint put forward by Sir Gordon WU, Mr Albert CHAN was concerned that this represented a fundamental change to the planning framework adopted by the Administration under the Territorial Development Strategy and the Third Comprehensive Transport Study. In considering the planning mechanism of the Administration and the lead time required for the related processes including detailed planning and statutory procedures, he was worried that the revised blueprint, if adopted, might upset the planning and implementation of infrastructural projects which were being undertaken by the Administration. As a result, some of the committed/planned developments would have to be deferred or modified to tally with the proposed revision. In case the committed developments could not be completed as originally planned, chaotic and disastrous situation might result. The situation would further be aggravated if new problems were encountered in taking forward the revised blueprint as proposed by Sir Gordon WU.

14. Sir Gordon WU replied that in order to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness as an international maritime centre and a logistics centre, it was necessary to provide additional port facilities to cater for the latest circumstances and competition from the Mainland ports. Regarding the pace of infrastructural development, he said that it was a matter for the Administration to decide taking into account the overall economic benefit that could be brought about by the development. He cited the examples of Cyberport and Hong Kong Disneyland to illustrate that effort could be made by the Government to complete development projects within a very short timeframe. There was a need to critically review the priority of individual infrastructural project taking into account the budget deficit faced by the Administration and cost-effectiveness of individual project. He also opined that in order to speed up the delivery process, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study should be conducted prior to completion of detailed study of individual project.

15. DS for ETW said that in taking forward infrastructural projects, the Administration would adopt a flexible approach and take into account latest circumstances including economic and social changes as well as the latest design of the project. As Route 10 Southern Section and Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link served different functions, the two projects were complementary to each other. On the latter project, the Administration was examining the feasibility of the project in the context of the study on the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link. The future location of port facilities would also be taken into account in the review process.

Action

16. Mr Albert CHAN however held the view that there was a potential conflict between the implementation of Route 10 Southern Section including Tsing Lung Bridge and the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link. Decision to go ahead with either one of the projects would certainly affect the cost-effectiveness of the remaining one. As the detailed design of Route 10 Southern Section had already commenced, it might invite criticism if the project was brought to a halt, bearing in mind the substantial changes involved in the new blueprint as proposed by Sir Gordon WU. He enquired about the justifications for the need to introduce such a change at this stage.

17. Sir Gordon WU clarified that he was only calling for a review rather than a complete cessation of the project. He said that in view of the latest circumstances, it would be worthwhile to review the need of Route 10, taking into account the substantial investment involved in the project which might exceed \$30 billion. Given the huge investment of the Hong Kong International Airport, there was a need to provide an efficient transport network to link the airport island. The proposed Tsing Lung Bridge was not an optimum solution and could not serve the need of residents in NWNT. It also did not take into account the likely development of port facilities in the north-western part of Lantau. He also highlighted the fact that the revenues generated by Tai Lam Tunnel and Lantau Link were not even sufficient to recover the recurrent costs. From an economic point of view, there was no reason to proceed with the Tsing Lung Bridge. If Government merely wanted to address the problem of congestion, consideration could be given to providing a parallel bridge next to Ting Kau Bridge. This option would be more cost-effective as the construction cost of Ting Kau Bridge was only about \$1 billion.

Review of the Route 10 project

18. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that he had all along considered it necessary to consider the latest circumstances relating to the proposed construction of Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link before a final decision was made on Route 10. Given the resource implications, he enquired whether the outcome of the on-going studies on the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link and the new container terminal development on Lantau would have any implications on the on-going planning and implementation of Route 10.

19. DS for ETW replied that the Administration would keep in view the implementation programme of Route 10 Northern Section. As for Route 10 Southern Section and Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, he clarified that they served different functions. On the former, it served to provide an alternative access to Lantau Link. It could be taken as a stand alone project even without Route 10 Northern Section. Regarding the planning of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, the Administration was considering the project, taking into account the future port development in Lantau and the possible landing point of the proposed Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link in Lantau.

Action

20. Given that Route 10 Southern Section would provide an alternative link for residents in Tuen Mun to travel via the proposed Tai Lam Chung Tunnel to Kwai Chung areas, Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired whether the revised infrastructural plan put forward by Sir Gordon WU would adversely affect the interest of residents in Tuen Mun. He also enquired about the lead time required for undertaking the revised infrastructural plan put forward by Sir Gordon WU as detailed design would need to be done from scratch. This might have adverse impact on residents. On the other hand, he also remarked that as the present form of Route 10 was no longer a strategic cross-boundary highway, there was a need to ascertain the cost-effectiveness of the project. He urged the Administration to seriously review the whole infrastructural programme before putting funding proposal to the Council.

21. Sir Gordon WU replied that due to the EIA process, it took a longer time to take forward an infrastructural project in Hong Kong. Indeed, the whole process could be streamlined by advancing the EIA studies prior to commissioning of detailed design. He also considered that private sector participation in the form of "Design and Build" could be adopted to speed up the delivery time. Based on previous experience, it took about four to five years to construct a bridge but only three years for tunnel. Given that Tsing Lung Bridge was planned for 2008, there should be sufficient time to complete the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link if the EIA process could be streamlined. He would discuss further with the Administration on how to take forward the project if necessary.

22. Mr Winston CHU Ka-sun of Civic Exchange Limited remarked that upon the opening of West Rail in 2003, it was estimated that it would attract a daily patronage of 350 000. This would significantly relieve traffic on Tuen Mun Road. Further, with Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, residents in NWNT and container trucks could make use of this route to the airport which in turn would indirectly relieve the burden on Tuen Mun Road. The Administration needed to take all factors into consideration and adjust its programme to suit the latest changes in circumstances.

23. In view of the budget deficit faced by the Administration, Mr Tommy CHEUNG urged the Administration to critically review the need for Route 10 Southern Section before funding proposal was put forward to PWSC. He shared the views expressed by the deputations that there was a need to review the overall planning of infrastructural development, taking into account the location of the future port facilities. He was not convinced that there was an urgent need to spend a huge sum of money to provide an alternative external road link for Lantau and the airport as presently proposed.

24. Mr Abraham SHEK remarked that he was in support of the Administration's plan to speed up the delivery of public works programme to boost employment. However, in view of the budget deficit faced by Hong Kong, there was a need to strike a balance taking into account the economic benefits that could be brought about by the proposed implementation of Route 10 Southern Section. He said that Route 10 Southern Section was no longer a strategic highway as numerous changes had been introduced over the

Action

years. To sustain the growth of Hong Kong economy, there was a need to review the whole infrastructural programme, taking into account the views expressed by various parties, the development plan in Lantau and the proposed Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link. If Government maintained its view to proceed with Route 10 Southern Section under such circumstances, it should give full justifications to account for its decision.

25. DS for ETW said that at present, the Administration was still working on the detailed design of Route 10 Southern Section. He noted members' view about the project and would review its need before submitting funding proposal for the construction of Route 10 Southern Section to PWSC, tentatively scheduled for next year.

26. Mr CHENG Kar-foo cast doubt on the effectiveness of Route 10 Southern Section, particularly when Route 10 Northern Section might not be able to proceed as originally planned. He also enquired whether implementation of Route 10 Southern Section would be withheld as a result of the Financial Secretary's remark to shelve projects with low economic value. He was concerned about the recent debate between the Government and other interested private developers over the need for Route 10 and other alternative transport network. He called on the Administration to conduct further studies to ensure that infrastructural developments in Hong Kong would tally with and facilitate the growth of economy and would bring about the greatest benefits to Hong Kong economy. To this end, it was important to speed up the decision process. He enquired about the completion time of the on-going study of Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link.

27. DS for ETW replied that the Administration conducted annual Strategic Highway Project Reviews taking into account the latest changes in circumstances and projections of growth in various aspects. The need for and timing of Route 10 Northern Section would be considered in the context of the next annual review. On the timetable of Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link, the Administration could not give a definite timetable at this stage. However, it was beyond doubt that the Link would bring substantial benefits to the economy of Hong Kong and the Administration was actively pursuing this project.

28. Mr CHENG Kar-foo remarked that the Administration should not drag on the issue of Route 10 and a firm decision had to be made expeditiously on how to take forward infrastructural development in Hong Kong including the proposed Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link. He maintained his view that Route 10 Northern Section would be required if no additional infrastructure was in place to relieve the congestion at Tuen Mun and Yuen Long upon the commissioning of SWC. He also cautioned that as Route 10 Southern Section was already gazetted, Government needed to put forward detailed justifications for suspending the project if it was so desired in the end.

29. DS for ETW said that it was the intention of the Administration to proceed with the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link. However, the Administration needed to examine

Action

the issue further with the counterparts in the Mainland as much of the link would be in Mainland waters.

30. Mr TAM Yiu-chung remarked that in March 2002, the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong voted down the funding proposal for the detailed design of Route 10 Northern Section as it considered necessary to take into account the findings of the study on a link bridge between Lantau and PRD as advocated by Sir Gordon WU before a final decision was made on Route 10. With the recent development for the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link, it proved that the then decision was right and appropriate. Otherwise, substantial resources would be wasted as a result of the latest changes in circumstances. He called on the Administration to review the transport need of residents in NWNT taking into account the additional traffic generated by SWC. He also saw the need for the Administration to review the need and timing of Route 10, both the Northern and Southern Sections.

31. Mr Albert HO remarked that in discussing the Route 10 project at the beginning of the year, the Democratic Party was of the view that if there was no other supporting infrastructure to tally with the commissioning of SWC and DBL, Route 10 should be implemented as scheduled. The four local District Councils were also very concerned about the need to provide sufficient infrastructure to cope with the additional traffic generated by the commissioning of SWC and DBL. The proposal from Sir Gordon WU was far-seeing. The Democratic Party supported the Administration to examine further the proposal with a view to keeping abreast of the latest trends in economic development. He however was worried that if Government did not make a firm decision to introduce appropriate infrastructure to relieve the additional traffic upon the opening of SWC and DBL within a short timeframe, residents in NWNT would suffer from serious congestion.

32. Mr Albert CHAN said the Democratic Party was in support of Route 10 in its entirety as originally planned. There was no reason to support Route 10 Southern Section but not Northern Section. Regarding the infrastructural plan put forward by Sir Gordon WU, he reiterated that there was a need to carry out further examination as it would have significant impact on the development and planning of on-going projects in the territory. It was of paramount importance that the interests of the residents in NWNT should not be compromised. He was worried that without adequate infrastructural development, serious congestion on Tuen Mun Road would recur. To safeguard the interests of residents, he urged the Route 3 Company to lower its toll or grant concession to attract motorists to use Route 3.

33. Mr Gary LUK, General Manager of Route 3 (CPS) Co. Ltd. replied that since the opening of Route 3 in May 1998, various concessions had been granted to motorists. The toll levels were significantly lower than the statutory limits. The traffic flow was only some 40 000 vehicles/day. Whilst the Company was prepared to play a role to attract traffic from Tuen Mun Road to Route 3 to achieve traffic diversion, the tunnel

Action

tolls could not be set too low, otherwise it would be at the expense of investors. The Company already recorded an annual loss of \$800 million.

34. Sir Gordon WU agreed that it was of paramount importance to satisfy the transport needs of residents in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. Apart from the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, he also proposed for the Administration's consideration the Tuen Mun East By-pass which would serve the residents there.

35. Mr Albert CHAN said that unless some form of incentive measures was introduced by Route 3 Company to divert traffic from Tuen Mun Road to Route 3, particularly during peak periods, residents in NWNT would oppose to the delay of the delivery of Route 10, both the Northern and Southern Sections.

36. Mr Gary LUK, General Manager of Route 3 (CPS) Co. Ltd. said that the Company was prepared to discuss with the Administration on how to achieve traffic diversion between Tuen Mun Road and Route 3. In planning for new infrastructure, Government should also take into account the spare capacity of Route 3 and see how it could be further utilized.

37. The Chairman also called on the Administration to explore measures to satisfy the transport needs of residents in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long if Route 10, both the Northern and Southern Sections, were not proceeded as originally planned. She also opined that Route 10 Southern Section alone was not an ideal arrangement as it could not meet the development need of the territory. She urged the Administration to speed up the review of the infrastructural plan, taking into account the latest changes in circumstances in port development and the on-going study of the Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link. In her opinion, the Administration should have conducted a review at the time when a decision was made on the Disneyland project, thereby saving the need for putting forward the Route 10 project in a piece-meal manner resulting in the present debate over the need for Route 10 vis-à-vis other alternative transport network.

Continuation of work relating to Route 10 Southern Section

38. Mr Abraham SHEK remarked that it was a waste of public resources to carry on with the detailed design of Route 10 Southern Section under such circumstances. He said that the related work should be suspended pending a comprehensive review of the infrastructural development in Hong Kong. He asked about the additional expenditure incurred as a result of the continuation of the detailed design of Route 10 Southern Section.

39. DPM/MW (Ag.) replied that the detailed design of Route 10 Southern Section was progressing. At present, 80% of the work had been completed. Should Government decide to stop design work at this stage, it could invite claims from the consultants. He said that the sum of the remaining work was estimated to be \$20 million.

Action

40. Mr Abraham SHEK said that each contract should contain an escape clause to allow a party to terminate under specified conditions. He was dissatisfied that Government insisted to continue with the detailed design of Route 10 Southern Section which was a waste of resources. He called on the Administration to negotiate with the consultants.

Environmental impact of the infrastructural developments

41. To meet the navigational needs of future containership with a design drafts of 18 metres, Mr SIN Chung-kai was worried that substantial dredging works would be required. He enquired about the environmental implications of the related works.

42. Sir Gordon WU replied that dredging had been widely applied in Hong Kong during the construction of the airport at Chek Lap Kok and the number of white dolphins increased after completion of the works. The cost incurred was not high and dredging was proved to be technically feasible. He remarked that at present, the deepest draft of containerships calling at Yantian port was 18 metres. In order to maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness as the world's leading container port, sufficient infrastructure and facilities must be put in place to receive the future generation of mega-containerships.

43. Mr Winston CHU Ka-sun of Civic Exchange Limited said that it was environmentally not acceptable to develop Tuen Mun West into a container port. As such, further thought should be given to North-west Lantau. He agreed that dredging would cause significant impact on environment. As such, he called on parties concerned to work together with a view to working out an acceptable solution which could strike a balance between environmental protection and economic development.

Consultation with local District Councils

44. Ir Dr Raymond HO remarked that various deputations had utilized their own resources to draw up substantive proposals on the infrastructural development in Hong Kong for the Administration's consideration. He asked if the Administration was prepared to put forward proposals from deputations to the local District Councils including Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Ching for consultation. If so, whether the deputations involved would be invited to attend the relevant District Council meetings to account for their proposals. He also asked about the scope of and timing for consultation.

45. DS for ETW replied that he would consider the member's view in collaboration with the Home Affairs Department. Mr SIN Chung-kai said that it might be helpful for the Administration to convene a forum, through the Central Policy Unit, to consult the public on the infrastructural development in Hong Kong, including the proposed Route 10, new container port and Hong Kong-Pearl River West Link.

Action

Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link

46. Mr Tommy CHEUNG enquired whether the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link would have any implications on containerships calling at Hong Kong with a design drafts of 18 metres and whether the proposed link could be designed to operate throughout typhoon conditions 24-hour a day.

47. Sir Gordon WU replied that the ship channel would not be affected by the proposed construction of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and the road tunnel approach was widely used in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world, for example, Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel in the United States, Tokyo Bay and the one between Denmark and Sweden etc. It could be open to traffic 24-hour a day even during adverse weather.

48. Mr Winston CHU Ka-sun of Civic Exchange Limited added that the deepest summer draft of containerships currently calling at Hong Kong was 14.5 metres. The sizes of containerships were projected to increase gradually in the coming decade and the trend for larger container vessels would continue with ships with 10 000 to 12 000 TEUs that might come on stream in future years. It was imperative for Hong Kong to appreciate the development of container vessels to ensure its infrastructure and facilities were able to receive the future generation of mega-containerships. To meet the navigational needs of future containerships with a deepest summer draft of 18 metres, the only feasible location within Hong Kong waters was North-west Lantau. In order to maintain Hong Kong's competitive edge, it was necessary to bring in sufficient infrastructure for the development of a logistics hub in Hong Kong with the availability of inter-modal transport.

49. DS for ETW said that in considering the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, the Administration would examine the feasibility of a tunnel approach for the Link.

Location of future container port

50. Citing the overseas experience at Rotterdam and Hamburg where container ports were clustered in a single location, Mr SIN Chung-kai enquired whether the proposed port at Tuen Mun West or North-west Lantau away from the Kwai Chung Container Port would obstruct the port development in Hong Kong and created undue operational problem.

51. Sir Gordon WU said that Tuen Mun West was not a desirable location for container port due to shallow ship channel. The most ideal location lied in North West Lantau (i.e. south-western part of the airport). It was close to the manufacturing base in PRD. It could provide direct access for barges from PRD. It also allowed inter-modal transport as it was located next to the airport with good transport links. East Lamma Channel, on the other hand, was an alternative location but additional transport link was

Action

required. The volume of containers carried by vessels was forecast to reach 30 million TEUs. Kwai Chung Container Port alone could not cope with the increase in demand.

The way forward

52. After deliberation, members requested the Administration to revert to the Panel in late 2002 with an update on the programme of the various infrastructural projects. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works should be invited to the Panel to brief members on the way forward.

II Any other business

53. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 January 2003