

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2428/02-03
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration and
cleared with the Chairman)

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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on matters relating to railways

**Minutes of meeting on
Friday, 18 July 2003, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Non-Subcommittee : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Members attending Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Members absent : Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Public Officers : **Agenda Item III**
attending Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mr Arthur HO
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works

Mr K M WOO
Chief Inspecting Officer (Railways)

Transport Department

Miss Alice AU-YEUNG
Principal Transport Officer/Bus & Railway

Highways Department

Mr K K CHAN
Chief Engineer/West Rail

Agenda Item IV

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mr Arthur HO
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works

Mr William SHIU
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works

Transport Department

Mr Peter LUK
Assistant Commissioner/New Territories

Mr Carey WONG
Chief Transport Officer/New Territories (Special Duties)

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Agenda Items III and IV

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr K Y YEUNG
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Y T LI
Director, East Rail

Mr Ian THOMS
Director, West Rail

Mr Jonathan YU
Director, Light Rail

Mr W K TSUI
General Manager, Light Rail Operations

Mr Leo MAK
General Manager, Railway Systems

Mrs Irene YAU
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

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

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

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant 5

Action

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising
(LC Paper No. CB(1)2202/02-03 - Minutes of meeting held on 6 June 2003)

The minutes of meeting held on 6 June 2003 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(1)2209/02-03(01) - Information paper on "Shatin to Central Link" provided by the Administration)

2. Members noted the above information paper issued since last meeting.

III Commissioning of West Rail
(LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(01) - Information paper provided by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation)

3. With the aid of PowerPoint, Mr Ian THOMS, Director of West Rail (D/WR), took members through the progress of the West Rail (WR) project to date as set out in

Action

LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(01). Mr Y T LI, Director of East Rail (D/ER), also presented the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC)'s plan to restructure and combine all its transport divisions into a single business unit to enable more flexibility in managing changing operational requirements. Details were set out in paragraphs 22 to 25 of LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(01).

(Post-meeting note: A set of presentation materials provided by KCRC was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2254/02-03(01).)

KCRC 4. To facilitate members' monitoring on the project, Mr Albert CHAN requested KCRC to provide the following information in writing after the meeting:

- (a) latest estimate of WR project cost; and
- (b) amount and position of outstanding claims from contractors.

Testing and commissioning

5. Referring to the problems during the initial operation of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Line (TKL), Ir Dr Raymond HO cautioned KCRC to pay special attention to the integration of railway and station systems especially in respect of signalling, as well as those aspects with passenger interface impact, such as the operation of train doors and platform screen doors. To ensure the actual operability of WR, he stressed the need for both half load and full load testing during the trial operations.

6. As WR's opening was approaching, Mr LAU Ping-cheung said that the Corporation should make early arrangements to finalize the contingency measures for handling service disruptions in consultation with other public transport operators. D/ER advised that the Corporation had formulated a set of comprehensive rules and procedures to be followed in case of service disruptions. If the incident was expected to continue for over 20 minutes and emergency transport support services from other operators were required, the Corporation would alert the public transport operators concerned in accordance with the Transport Department (TD)'s alert system. For ease of mobilization, the Corporation would in the first instance despatch its KCR bus fleet to transfer the passengers. Buses of the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited would also be called in if additional transport service was required.

7. In response, Mr K Y YEUNG, the Chief Executive Officer of KCRC (CEO of KCRC), reported that during testing and commissioning, some signalling failures and system integration problems had been identified and steps were being taken to rectify the same by software upgrades. As the commissioning process entered into the final phase of trial operations, the frequency of trains running on the mainline would be increased to facilitate the detection and prompt rectification of other hidden faults in the systems. The trial operations would also include drills and joint exercises of simulated events to test the adequacy of contingency procedures. He stressed that the aim was to ensure the capability of WR to provide a safe, efficient and reliable service

Action

to passengers by achieving a sustained period of consistent punctuality and service reliability. However, given its complexity, there were bound to be problems during the initial operation of a new railway system. To be on the safe side, the Corporation was planning to extend the trial operation to allow for more thorough testing before the official opening of WR in Autumn 2003.

8. In response to Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, CEO of KCRC said that subject to the approval of the Railway Inspectorate, the Corporation was considering a charity test ride of WR during its soft opening one to two weeks before actual commissioning to allow the passengers to travel on WR for a nominal fare. All revenue raised during the event would be donated to charities.

Environmental matters

9. Relaying the complaints from residents of Sun Yuen Long Centre, Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shing Court and Fu Loy Garden about noise disturbance during WR's trial operations, Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the measures to be taken by the Corporation to address their concerns. Specifically, the problems included engine traction noise, wheel/rail rolling noise, aerodynamic noise produced by the passage of trains through stations, as well as the increasing level of noise suffered by residents living on higher floors of buildings in the vicinity. Expressing similar concern, Dr TANG Siu-tong pointed out that excessive train noise at late night was particularly disturbing to the nearby residents.

10. The Chairman recalled that during the Subcommittee's site visit to WR sites in April 2001, the Corporation had assured members that new noise attenuation system adopted for WR trains would be effective in ensuring that the residents nearby would not be disturbed by excessive train operation noise.

11. While affirming KCRC's commitment of complying with statutory noise requirements, CEO of KCRC reported that some noise complaints had been received from residents in the neighbourhood. As far as the problem with Sun Yuen Long Centre in Yuen Long was concerned, he said that after rail grinding, the noise from wheel/rail interface had been reduced to levels marginal to statutory limits. Nevertheless, a longer-term problem was identified and additional noise mitigation measures would be required. Furthermore, the Corporation was looking into the feasibility of installing higher noise barriers along those sections in close proximity to residential developments, such as Fu Loy Garden. D/WR added that complaints received from residents in other areas were being dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The Corporation would continue to monitor the situation and look for every possible improvements. In the meantime, the Corporation would send out bulletins to inform the residents concerned about the improvements being sought.

12. Mr Albert CHAN also expressed concern about the noise disturbance created as a result of WR's operation. He said that acting on complaints from local residents, he had personally measured the noise levels experienced at some affected dwellings. The measurements were much higher than those taken by the Corporation. To ensure

Action

fairness, the Corporation should engage an independent third party to ascertain the noise levels of the affected dwellings so that suitable mitigation measures could be taken. Referring to the relation between speed and noise level, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that when taking noise level measurements at the affected dwellings, it would be important to ensure that the trains were running at the same speed as in normal operation.

13. In response, D/WR explained that different measurements might be recorded during different times of the day. As far as he knew, the Environmental Protection Department had also measured the noise level experienced at Sun Yuen Long Centre. To address Mr Albert CHAN's concern about the accuracy of KCRC's measurements, arrangements could be made to measure the noise levels at specified locations in his presence.

14. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was particularly concerned about the noise nuisance created by maintenance activities during late night. D/ER responded that in order to ensure railway safety, track maintenance activities would have to be carried out during late night after the close of passenger traffic. Learning from the experience of East Rail, diesel locomotives had been converted to allow for quieter operation during track maintenance activities. Sometimes, noisy equipment such as tamping machines and rail grinders would have to be used. In order to minimize the noise level, acoustic covers would be installed on track maintenance machines. Portable acoustic noise sheds in the form of a tent, inside which the maintenance works were to be carried out, would also be used as far as practicable. CEO of KCRC supplemented that major track maintenance works would be undertaken only once or twice every year. Acknowledging the disturbance so caused, he called on the understanding of the affected residents from the perspective of maintaining railway safety. Under those circumstances, the Corporation would ensure that the affected residents were properly informed before the maintenance work was carried out.

15. In reply to Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's further enquiry, D/ER said that under normal circumstances, the noise level of the converted diesel locomotives would not exceed 81 dB(A). As these locomotives were mainly used for transportation purpose, the engine would be turned off when left idle. Hence, no continuous noise would be emitted. The Chairman however pointed out that such a high level of noise at late night was hardly acceptable. The Corporation should try its best to minimize the noise disturbance created for the residents nearby.

Provision of feeder transport facilities

16. As many residents would ride on bicycles to get to WR stations, Mr WONG Sing-chi enquired about the provision and management of bicycle parking spaces in the vicinity of WR stations. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (DS for ETW) replied that the Administration was mindful of the need to ensure accessibility for cyclists when planning for the ancillary transport facilities of WR stations. The Principal Transport Officer/Bus & Railway agreed to provide members with information on the provision of bicycle parking spaces for WR stations

Action

after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The requested information was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2369/02-03(01).)

17. Dr TANG Siu-tong enquired about the provision of park and ride facilities for various WR stations. CEO of KCRC replied that car parking spaces would be available to be operated as a park and ride facility at the west side of Kam Sheung Road station. As for Tsuen Wan West, Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun stations, there was an adequate supply of reasonably-priced parking spaces nearby. The Corporation would actively pursue the possibility of co-operative arrangements with the operators concerned.

IV Reorganisation of Light Rail and other public transport services in North West New Territories upon West Rail commissioning

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(02) - Information paper provided by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation;

LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration;

LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(04) - Referral from DRM meeting with "Chui Yin Society and the Owners' Corporations of Hung Shui Kiu District" on 27 May 2003; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(05) - Response from the Administration and the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation on the DRM referral)

18. Members noted the views of a local group, viz. Chui Yin Society and the Owners' Corporations of Hung Shui Kiu District, on the service changes proposed to be introduced to a number franchised bus and Light Rail Transit (LRT) routes upon the commissioning of WR (LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(04)). The response from the Administration and KCRC on such views was given at LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(05).

19. With the aid of PowerPoint presentation, Mr Jonathan YU, Director of Light Rail (D/LR), briefed members on the implementation programme for the revised reorganization plan of LRT services to tie in with WR's commissioning. Details were set out in the paper provided by KCRC vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(02).

(Post-meeting note: A set of presentation materials provided by KCRC was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2254/02-03(02).)

20. The Assistant Commissioner for Transport/New Territories (AC for T/NT) presented the final outcome of local consultation on the Government's proposals to

Action

reorganize the public transport network (PT plan) of the North West New Territories (NWNT) in connection with WR's opening. Details of the revised PT plan and its implementation programme were set out in the information paper provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)2203/02-03(02)).

21. Members in general considered that the reorganization of public transport services in NWNT should be introduced progressively so as to reduce the impact on the local residents. As such, they welcomed the decision of KCRC and the Administration to introduce changes to LRT and other public transport services in NWNT in phases. Members also noted that extensive publicity would be launched by KCRC and the Administration before WR's opening to assist passengers to familiarize with the changes of public transport services.

Reorganization of LRT services

22. Relaying the concerns of local residents about the cancellation of direct LR service between Hung Shui Kiu and Tin Shui Wai under the reorganization plan, Dr TANG Siu-tong enquired about the measures to be taken by KCRC to facilitate the safety commuting of inter-district school children between the two areas. In reply, D/LR said that having consulted local views, arrangement had been made to extend the service of KCR bus route K75 to Tin Shui during peak hours.

23. Dr TANG also suggested that to further improve the connectivity of WR for residents in Tin Shui Wai North, LR route 761 should be extended to terminate at WR Tin Shui Wai station instead of LR Tin Wing stop. D/LR explained that under the revised LR route plan, residents of Tin Shui Wai North were given a number of route choices for LR feeder service to WR stations. Apart from LR route 761, the passengers could also take routes 701 or 751 for WR Tin Shui Wai or Yuen Long stations respectively.

24. While welcoming KCRC's decision to retain LR route 601 to provide service coverage for Tuen Mun Hospital, Mr Albert HO opined that the reorganization of LRT services should only be limited to those overlapping with WR so that LR's local service in Tuen Mun would not be affected. Hence, he was strongly of the view that two popular long distance inter-town LR routes, i.e. routes 614 and 615, should not be withdrawn completely. Instead, they could be truncated to maintain local service between Tuen Mun and Siu Hong. Noting the Corporation's intention to cancel route 615 one month and route 614 three months after WR's opening, Mr HO called on the Corporation to review these two routes together three months after WR's opening to allow a longer observation period. He further sought the Corporation's undertaking that the Tuen Mun District Council would be consulted before a final decision was made.

25. D/LR explained that when planning for the restructuring of LR routes, the Corporation was mindful of the need to maintain LR's role in providing local commuter service in Tuen Mun. CEO of KCRC added that with the cancellation of these routes, the resources could be re-deployed to increase the overall efficiency of

Action

LR service as two new circular routes would be introduced in Tuen Mun with enhanced frequency. While assuring members that the service provided by LRT upon reorganization could adequately meet the demand of local transport in Tuen Mun, D/LR said that the Corporation would consult local views before finalizing the proposed service changes taking into account the change of passengers' travel pattern and the actual demand.

26. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung however was unconvinced by KCRC's reply. He said that local residents in Tuen Mun were gravely concerned about the reduced level of LRT service after reorganization as more frequent interchange/transfer between LRT routes was required causing inconvenience and longer journey times to the passengers. There was also concern about platform safety as more passengers would be waiting on the platforms for interchange service. Reiterating the importance of maintaining adequate local transportation services in Tuen Mun, Mr LEUNG was strongly of the view that changes to LRT services should only be implemented some time after WR's opening.

27. In reply, D/LR called on members' understanding that with WR's opening, there would be tremendous increase in the capacity of public transport services in NWNT. To cope with such change, LRT services would need to be reorganized to ensure its efficient operation as a local commuter service provider as well as an important feeder to WR. In overall terms, the proposed service changes would bring benefits to a greater proportion of the passengers as a result of higher frequency services. Addressing Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's concern about the safety of waiting passengers, he said that improvements had been made to platform facilities at major interchange stations such as Tin Shui Wai, Tuen Mun and Siu Hong.

PT plan

28. Reiterating the concern of local residents about possible chaos resulting from too many changes upon the initial opening of WR, Mr TAM Yiu-chung cautioned the Administration and KCRC to adopt a more cautious and vigilant approach when implementing the service changes in phases. As many existing franchised bus routes would be affected under the PT plan, the Chairman said that particular attention should be paid to ensure that the passengers were well aware of changes to bus routings and bus stop locations before such changes were introduced.

29. In response, AC for T/NT said that the Administration would take heed of the members' advice and closely monitor the implementation of the service changes. Taking members through the three phases of the proposed PT plan which would be implemented over a period of three to six months after WR's opening, he said that if necessary, refinements might be made to individual service adjustment items and/or their implementation programme in consultation with the concerned parties having regard to the actual situation on the ground.

30. To ensure better co-ordination with WR, Mr Albert CHAN called on the Administration to finalize as soon as possible modifications required to be made to

Action

Admin

existing franchised bus and green minibus (GMB) routes to provide connecting services to and from various WR stations. AC for T/NT advised that during the three weeks before WR's opening, two new feeder bus routes to Nam Cheong station would be introduced. 24 existing franchised bus routes and 39 existing GMB routes operating in the vicinity would be diverted to call or terminate at various WR stations so that passengers would get familiarized with the revised routing before WR's opening. At Mr Albert CHAN's request, AC for T/NT agreed to provide members with a detailed schedule for implementing the proposed changes to these bus and GMB routes.

31. As a related issue, Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the impact of WR's opening on the operation of red minibuses (RMBs) in NWNT. To help improve their business opportunities, he called on the Administration to give favourable consideration to the request from RMB operators that they should be allowed to operate via Route 3.

32. AC for T/NT stated that it was the Government's established policy to encourage the conversion of RMBs to GMBs which operated scheduled services on fixed routes. The service levels and fares were also under the direct monitoring of TD. In accordance with this policy, new routes being planned to operate via Route 3 would be in the form of GMB service, and RMB operators were welcomed to bid for these routes.

33. To supplement, DS for ETW said that to facilitate the conversion of RMB operators to GMB operation, the Transport Advisory Committee had set up a working group to review the existing selection criteria and marking scheme for GMB operators selection exercises and to examine practical measures to facilitate participation of smaller RMB operators in the selection exercise. In carrying out the review, the working group would meet with the RMB and GMB trades and interested parties to listen to their views. The review was expected to be completed in August 2003. The Administration would also maintain dialogue with the RMB trade to see what further measures could be taken to assist their operation in NWNT.

(Post-meeting note: The report of the working group's review was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2359/02-03.)

V Any other business

34. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:35 pm.