

For information
23 February 2012

**Subcommittee on the Six Orders
Made Under Section 5(1) of the
Public Bus Services Ordinance and Gazetted on 20 January 2012**

Response to Members' Requests for Information / Suggestion

Purpose

This paper provides the information requested, and the Administration's response to the suggestion made, by Members at the meeting of the Subcommittee held on 14 February 2012.

Monitoring of Franchised Bus Operation

2. Franchised bus companies are required to operate the bus services in accordance with the routeing, timetable, frequency and bus allocation as stipulated in the Schedule of Service approved by the Transport Department ("TD"). They are also required to submit to TD operating returns on each route, including the number of buses deployed, the number of trips and kilometers travelled, and the number of passengers carried, etc.

3. TD monitors the operation of bus services through scrutiny of the operating returns and close monitoring of public feedback collected through various channels such as the Transport Complaints Unit and 1823 Call Centre. In addition, TD conducts regular surveys¹ to gather information about the level of service provided; and ad hoc surveys in response to complaints or suggestions, or problems which have been identified from the regular returns of bus companies.

4. If noticeable and consistent changes in demand for a particular bus route are noted, TD would liaise with the bus operators to adjust the services to match with changes in passenger demand. If any problem or deficiency is identified on any particular route or group of routes, for example, if traffic congestion plagues a particular route, TD will liaise with the relevant parties to address the problem and recommend improvement measures, such as

¹ The surveys include termini checks, en-route bus stop surveys, journey time surveys, screenline surveys and on-vehicle surveys, etc.

implementation of traffic management schemes, alteration of the bus routing or adjustment of service timetables. If the problem arises from operating practice, shortage of bus captains, or high breakdown rates of buses, TD will require the franchised bus companies to make improvement. TD will closely monitor the results of the improvement actions made by franchised bus companies through carrying out field surveys and checking reports submitted by the companies. In case a franchised bus company fails to provide reasonable explanation and make timely improvement, TD will issue reminder to the relevant franchised bus company, requesting it to implement improvement measures within a reasonable period of time. Follow-up surveys will also be arranged to ascertain the effectiveness of improvement measures made by franchised bus companies.

Bus trips which fail to meet the schedule of service

5. The percentages of bus trips which deviated from the Schedule of Service in 2011 (by District) are summarized in the Annex. Generally speaking, the lost trips were mainly attributed to traffic congestion, traffic incidents, breakdowns of vehicle and staff shortage.

6. According to franchised bus companies, high rates of turnover and sick leave of bus captains were the major reasons for missing bus trips in 2011. We understand that the franchised bus companies have been taking measures to improve the situation. These include recruitments of new bus captains, reviewing bus captains' remuneration and improving their working environments. TD would monitor the situation to ensure that the franchised bus companies would continue to take proactive actions to address the problem.

Electronic system to gather data of bus departures and arrivals at bus stops

7. The franchised bus companies are obliged to operate bus services in accordance with the approved timetable set out in the Schedule of Service. To this end, franchised bus companies deploy bus regulators at major bus termini to regulate bus departures and make adjustments in case of any service disruption.

8. At busy bus termini, the task of recording the departure information is enormous. To alleviate the workload, The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited ("KMB") and Long Win Bus Company Limited ("LWB") have developed an electronic "Terminus Management System" to assist in regulating bus arrival and departure times in some of their busy termini.

On the other hand, Citybus Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited have installed computer terminals at some busy termini. The bus regulators manually input the bus departure times to the computer, and the information is linked to the bus companies' in-house database. For those bus termini observed by infrequent bus service, bus captains will normally call up the companies' Control Centres to register any deviations from scheduled departure times. TD encourages franchised bus companies to develop and expand on-line electronic system to help maintain the regularity and reliability of their services, with due regard to operational need and cost effectiveness of such a system.

9. Franchised bus companies have the responsibility to ensure the operation of their bus services in accordance with the Schedule of Service and TD would continue to monitor their operations, and would request for improvement as and when required.

Advice Sought

10. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
Transport Department
February 2012**

Percentages of bus trips which deviated from Schedule of Service in 2011

| Districts | No. of bus routes terminating in the District | Scheduled Trips ('000) | Actual Trips ('000) | Deviations from the scheduled trips |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Central and Western | 109 | 2,180 | 2,104 | -3.5% |
| Eastern | 69 | 1,854 | 1,770 | -4.5% |
| Southern | 84 | 1,610 | 1,585 | -1.6% |
| Wan Chai | 35 | 857 | 825 | -3.7% |
| Kowloon City | 38 | 1,075 | 956 | -11.1% |
| Kwun Tong | 87 | 2,821 | 2,601 | -7.8% |
| Sham Shui Po | 51 | 1,563 | 1,410 | -9.8% |
| Yau Tsim Mong | 92 | 2,787 | 2,527 | -9.3% |
| Wong Tai Sin | 45 | 1,618 | 1,489 | -8.0% |
| Island | 69 | 1,001 | 1,077 | 7.6% |
| Kwai Tsing | 63 | 2,192 | 2,097 | -4.3% |
| North | 35 | 1,521 | 1,413 | -7.1% |
| Sai Kung | 40 | 832 | 799 | -4.0% |
| Shatin | 91 | 2,823 | 2,654 | -6.0% |
| Tai Po | 29 | 805 | 789 | -2.0% |
| Tsuen Wan | 61 | 1,805 | 1,703 | -5.7% |
| Tuen Mun | 42 | 1,021 | 966 | -5.4% |
| Yuen Long | 38 | 1,084 | 1,034 | -4.6% |
| Total | | 29,447 | 27,800 | -5.6% |

Note: For routeings with terminating points at 2 different districts, the routes will be counted on both districts and their trips data will be shared evenly among the 2 districts.