

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2584/11-12
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Tuesday, 10 July 2012, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 2B of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Members absent** : Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP

**Public Officers
attending** : **Agenda item II**

Professor Anthony B L CHEUNG, GBS, JP
Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr Joseph LAI Yee-tak, JP
Permanent Secretary for Transport & Housing
(Transport)

Ms Rebecca PUN Ting-ting, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport & Housing
(Transport)1

Mr Patrick CHAN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)3

Mr LAM Sai-hung
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport &
Housing (Transport)7

Agenda item III

Mr Patrick CHAN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)3

Miss Erica NG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport) 2

Mr Albert SU
Assistant Commissioner/Management &
Paratransit
Transport Department

Mr Michael NG
Principal Transport Officer/Management
Transport Department

Mr Arthur WONG
Chief Engineer/Project
Electrical & Mechanical Services Department

Agenda item IV

Mr Edward TO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport)⁵

Mr NIP Chi-kwong
Chief Highway Engineer/Research and
Development; doubling-up Assistant
Director/Technical
Highways Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Chief Council Secretary (1)²

Staff in attendance : Ms Macy NG
Senior Council Secretary (1)²

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (1)²

Action

I Information papers issued since last meeting

Members noted that no paper had been issued since the last meeting held on 27 June 2012.

II Briefing by the new Secretary for Transport and Housing
(LC Paper No. - Letter dated 4 July 2012 from Hon
CB(1)2319/11-12(01) WONG Sing-chi)

2. Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH) briefed members on the transport policies and measures of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) and the latest progress of the relevant policy initiatives.

Discussion

Railway services and MTR fare adjustment

3. Mr WONG Sing-chi sought the Administration's response to the recent media reports on the alleged unlawful letting of optical fibre by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) since 2000 to mobile phone operators. He asked whether the Administration would consider requesting MTRCL to use the rental received to set up a fare stabilization fund so that MTR fare adjustments could hopefully be averted in the next few years. Expressing dissatisfaction with the frequent occurrence of railway incidents, Mr WONG further asked whether a mechanism would be put in place to compensate the affected passengers for the inconvenience caused by train service disruptions.

4. In response, STH made the following points:

- (a) the letting of optical fibre by MTRCL was related to matters of lease conditions and the case was still under investigation by the Lands Department. As the investigation findings were still pending, it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the case at the present stage. Notwithstanding, the Government had reminded MTRCL of the need to fully comply with the relevant lease conditions in its operations;
- (b) the rental in question had already been reflected in the income account of MTRCL and included as part of the dividends received by the Government as a shareholder of MTRCL;
- (c) the proposal of setting up a fare stabilization fund would have to be carefully considered as it was not in keeping with the general framework of public finance management, according to which income received for the Government should be paid into the general revenue, and withdrawal of money from the general revenue should be subject to the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council; and
- (d) the Administration was also very concerned about the occurrence of railway incidents and so the upcoming review of the MTRCL's fare adjustment mechanism (FAM) would examine how service performance might be assessed and linked to FAM.

5. Ms LI Fung-ying considered that throughout the review of FAM, the Administration should engage in close consultation with the relevant stakeholders and take into account their views before drawing any conclusion. Mr IP Wai-ming asked whether consideration would be given to imposing a cap on the MTR fare increases in the future, and whether profits earned by MTRCL from property developments would be taken into account in the formula under FAM.

6. STH responded that the Administration had already engaged a consultant to conduct a study on FAM and how it might be improved. The consultant had been asked to consider, inter alia, whether and how new components, such as MTRCL's operational costs and profit level, its operational efficiency and service performance, as well as the affordability of general public should be introduced to the formula. Recommendations made therein would serve as references for the Administration in the upcoming review. STH said that members' suggestions of improvements for the existing FAM would be considered in the course of the review. He added that the Administration would also engage in extensive public consultation during the review.

7. Mr Albert CHAN expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Administration and MTRCL deciding to go ahead with the MTR fare adjustment despite the unanimous passage of two motions by the Panel on 12 April 2012, one requesting MTRCL to immediately shelve its fare increase and the other one requesting the Government to return its dividends to MTRCL so as to avert the fare increase. STH explained that the fare adjustment was made in accordance with FAM which was legally binding. He said that the Administration valued members' views and would study their various suggestions on how to improve the existing FAM in the upcoming review.

Ad hoc quota trial scheme for cross-boundary private cars (the quota scheme)

8. Pointing out that the second phase of the quota scheme, which allowed eligible owners of Guangdong private cars to enter Hong Kong by using ad hoc quotas, was very controversial, Ms LI Fung-ying asked about the Administration's present thinking on the issue. Mr KAM Nai-wai asked whether STH would give an undertaking not to implement the second phase during his term of office.

9. STH advised that as the Administration had previously explained, upon implementation of the first phase of the quota scheme, the Administration would carefully observe and review the operation and

effectiveness of various aspects of the quota scheme. Experts of the Guangdong and Hong Kong governments would further study and discuss the specific arrangements for the second phase when there was experience in smooth operation after implementing the first phase for a period of time. STH assured members that there was no concrete timetable for the second phase of the quota scheme. STH added that since implementation of the first phase, the number of quotas issued so far was below 1 000 and only a few hundreds of private cars had made use of the quotas to drive to Guangdong. The Administration had not observed any implementation problem so far.

Construction of the third runway

10. Ms LI Fung-ying and Miss Tanya CHAN pointed out that notwithstanding the economic benefits that might be generated to Hong Kong by the proposed construction of the third runway, the public remained very concerned about its environmental implications. They urged the Administration to conduct the relevant public engagement properly. In particular, Miss CHAN considered that the Government, which wholly owned the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK), should require AAHK to conduct a comprehensive environmental impact assessment (EIA) study for the project and to come up with well thought out mitigation measures. She hoped that the benchmarks devised for the study could then be adopted for conducting the same assessments for future infrastructure projects of a similarly large scale.

11. STH responded that there was a strong economic case for the construction of a third runway for the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), and expanding HKIA's capacity would boost Hong Kong's air connectivity and economic growth. He said that the Administration and AAHK attached great importance to the EIAs for the project, which would be conducted in strict accordance with the requirements and standards laid down under the law. He undertook that the Administration would listen to the views of the stakeholders in taking forward the necessary planning work. Miss Tanya CHAN further said that the Administration should conduct a strategic assessment which should look at the environmental impacts on Shenzhen and Hong Kong instead of just the district impact on Tung Chung and Tsuen Wan only. STH noted Miss CHAN's comments.

Cost control for transport infrastructural projects

12. Noting that the construction cost of on-going transport infrastructural projects totalled over \$100 billion, Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the monitoring measures to be taken to prevent cost overruns. STH

responded that the Administration had been closely monitoring the budgets of various transport infrastructure projects and they were all implemented within budget. Mr Albert CHAN considered that the Administration should put in place stringent cost control measures to ensure that there would not be cost overrun which, if occurred, would be substantial.

Need for review of transport policy

13. Mr IP Wai-ming pointed out as a result of the Government's policy of using railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's transport system, the development of other public transport means had been stifled. He said that residents of North District had been complaining that due to a serious lack of direct bus routes connecting the district with Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, they needed to change to different means of transport in order to travel to and from the urban area, resulting in spending lengthy time and high transportation cost. Tai Po residents had also needed to interchange for several times in order to go to Tuen Mun or Shenzhen Bay Port. Mr IP asked whether the Government's transport policy would be reviewed and refined to address residents' needs.

14. STH responded that the Government had adopted the policy of using railways as the backbone of our passenger transport system as railway provided highly efficient mass transport services. He said that the Administration was aware of the aspirations of North District residents and would study how the transport services in the district should be improved.

III New Parking Meter Trial Scheme

(LC Paper No. - Administration's paper entitled "New
CB(1)2322/11-12(01) Parking Meter Trial Scheme")

15. Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)3 (DS(T)3) and Assistant Commissioner/Management & Paratransit (AC/M&P) of Transport Department (TD) briefed members on the proposed New Parking Meter Trial Scheme (the trial) which aimed to assess the technical feasibility and public acceptance of the new features and functions to be incorporated in the new generation of parking meters. TD planned to complete the trial by early 2016 and conduct a tender exercise for the installation and operation of the new parking meters in 2017.

16. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired how personal data obtained from the payment of parking fees would be protected and how long the personal data would be stored in the new parking meters. Noting that TD would study the

capability of accepting multiple payment methods in the trial, he asked about the relevant arrangements and why the trial could not be completed until early 2016.

17. DS(T)3 responded that the Administration put great emphasis on the protection of personal data and would carefully consider the storage period of personal data in the new parking meters, making reference to overseas experience. The study on the capability of accepting multiple payment methods by the new parking meters aimed to facilitate payment by drivers as far as practicable. DS(T)3 advised that the trial would take about 36 months to complete. While the Administration had already taken the initiative to compress the trial programme, it should be noted that certain essential procedures had to be carried out, which included the conduct of the expression of interest exercise, the tender exercise, the production of prototype parking meters and a field trial. He assured members that the Administration would strive to complete the trial expeditiously. He added that in addition to urging contractors to produce the prototypes as soon as possible, the Administration would negotiate with them to produce the prototypes at their own costs.

18. The Deputy Chairman asked if the trial would look at enhancing the dissemination of information by use of information technology on the availability of parking spaces to facilitate drivers to park their cars. DS(T)3 responded that one of the new features and functions which would be assessed in the trial was the wireless connection for automatic uploading of transaction and utilization data in real time or in batch mode, and for remote configuration of meter settings. In response to the views of the Deputy Chairman, DS(T)3 said that the Administration would study the feasibility of disseminating information regarding the utilization of the new parking meters through TD's existing information dissemination platforms.

IV The use of crash cushion in Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. - Administration's paper entitled "Use
CB(1)2322/11-12(02) of crash cushions in Hong Kong")

19. Chief Highway Engineer/Research and Development (CHE(R&D))/Assistant Director/Technical (AD/T) (Atg) of Highways Department (HyD) made a powerpoint presentation on the installation of "crash cushions" at suitable road locations by HyD with a view to reducing the severity of injuries to drivers and passengers of errant vehicles during collisions with fixed objects on roads, thus enhancing road safety in Hong Kong.

20. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung asked whether there were any guidelines specifying the criteria for the installation of crash cushions and if there were, how many locations which met the criteria were still not installed with such protective measure. Given the different road circumstances in Hong Kong and that of overseas countries, he asked whether the crash cushions used in Hong Kong were tailor-made.

21. CHE(R&D)/AD/T(Atg) replied that the relevant guidelines were stipulated in the Transport Planning and Design Manual (the Manual) published by TD. According to the Manual, crash cushions would normally be installed on expressways and for locations of fixed objects with high risk of head-on impact. To enhance road safety, HyD had planned to install approximately nine sets of crash cushions on fixed objects where necessary in Hong Kong in the coming years and would continue to identify suitable locations for installing crash cushions where appropriate. He also confirmed that design of the crash cushions used in Hong Kong had taken account of the local congested road condition. At Mr LEUNG's request, he agreed to provide a copy of the relevant part of the Manual which provided guidelines on where crash cushions should be installed for the Panel's reference.

Admin

22. Mr CHAN Hak-kan expressed no objection to the installation of crash cushions in Hong Kong. However, he was concerned about the safety measures taken on narrow highways with sharp bends. Noticing that there were some cylindrical sand-filled or water-filled barrels which served similar functions with crash cushions, he asked why the Administration chose to adopt crash cushions instead of such barrels and how the crash cushions would compare with such barrels in terms of cost and effectiveness.

23. CHE(R&D)/AD/T(Atg) advised that sand-filled or water-filled barrels were commonly used in the Mainland. Although they might be less expensive than crash cushions, they did not meet the safety test criteria of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 350 of the USA unless a large amount of such barrels were placed at each single location of risk. The large space so required could hardly be available under the local congested road environment. Splash from the barrels during impact would also cause hazard to road users under the local road conditions. As such, HyD considered that crash cushion was more suitable for adoption in Hong Kong.

V Any other business

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

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 September 2012