

立法會  
*Legislative Council*

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by the Administration)

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**Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of special meeting held on  
Tuesday, 24 November 2015, at 9:30 am  
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH  
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP  
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS  
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kiwok, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
- Members absent** : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Hon WONG Yuk-man  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP  
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP  
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

**Public Officers  
attending : Agenda item I**

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

Mr Joseph LAI, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)

Mr Wallace LAU  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)<sup>4</sup>

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP  
Commissioner for Transport

Ms Macella LEE  
Assistant Commissioner for Transport /Management  
and Paratransit  
Transport Department

Mr Peter LAU, JP  
Director of Highways

Mr TUNG Hon-ming, JP  
Acting Director of Marine

Dr Jacob KAM  
Operations Director  
MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Fred LAM  
Chief Executive Officer  
Airport Authority Hong Kong

**Clerk in attendance:** Ms Sophie LAU  
Chief Council Secretary (4)6

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Macy NG  
Senior Council Secretary (4)6

Ms Emily LIU  
Legislative Assistant (4)6

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Action

**I. Emergency transport arrangements after the closure of Kap Shui Mun Bridge**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)245/15-16(01) - Administration's paper on emergency transport arrangements after the closure of Kap Shui Mun Bridge

LC Paper No. CB(4)245/15-16(02) - Paper on emergency transport arrangements after the closure of Kap Shui Mun Bridge prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(4)245/14-15(03) - Letter from Hon TANG Ka-piu on the closure of Kap Shui Mun Bridge and the contingency arrangements)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the contingency arrangements taken by various departments after the full closure of the Kap Shui Mun ("KSM") Bridge for about two hours upon impact by a vessel ("the vessel concerned") on the evening of 23 October 2015 ("the incident"); and the measures to prevent similar incidents from happening again in the future. The Chairman expressed appreciation to STH who came forward with all relevant head of government departments and organizations to attend the meeting to answer members' enquiries.

## The incident

2. The Chairman expressed concern over why the existing marine safety measures could not prevent the incident from happening. He asked about the duration of the vessel concerned staying in the height restriction area of the KSM Bridge, whether or not the Marine Department ("MD") had dispatched patrol launch(es) to prevent vessels exceeding the height limit from entering the restriction area, and the ability of patrol launch(es) to stop those vessels within a short period of time. He was also concerned if the closed-circuit television installed at the KSM Bridge was able to detect those vessels over the past years.
3. Acting Director of Marine ("Atg D of M") advised that the distance from the boundary of height restriction area to the KSM Bridge was about 450 meters wide. The vessel concerned in the incident could transit such distance in about two minutes. He added that before the accident, there was only one patrol launch serving Ma Wan and KSM Bridge area. Its ability to stop a vessel would depend on many factors, like the location of the patrol launch in operation and the speed of the vessel. STH supplemented that at the inter-departmental meeting held on 29 October 2015, it was agreed that one patrol launch serving Ma Wan and KSM Bridge area was not enough. As such, a temporary patrol launch was deployed after the incident.
4. In respect of the closed-circuit television installed at the KSM Bridge, Director of Highways ("DHy") advised that after the incident, the closed-circuit television footage provided by the management company of the KSM Bridge revealed that a tug boat and barge was passing under the Bridge at the same time. He said that practitioners in the industry were aware of the height restrictions in the KSM Bridge area. He pointed out that this was the first incident that the Ship Impact Alarm System connecting the Vessel Traffic Centre of MD, the MTR Corporation Limited and the management company for the KSM Bridge had been activated over the years.
5. Mr Albert CHAN considered that the incident had reflected the deficiencies of MD in maintaining safe operation of Hong Kong waters. He asked about the functions of the Ma Wan Marine Traffic Control Station and queried why the Station could not prevent the incident from happening. He also queried the decision to fully close the KSM Bridge for nearly two hours given that there was not any serious damage by sight inspection.
6. Atg D of M said that the Ma Wan Marine Traffic Control Station oversaw the marine traffic situation over the relevant waters. He explained that since local vessels were not installed with Automatic Identification System,

the Vessel Traffic Services System could not identify the vessel concerned through the radar surveillance system.

Contingency arrangements after full closure of the KSM Bridge

*Contingency transport service*

7. Mr WONG Kwok-hing criticized that the incident had shown that the Administration was not ready to react promptly to such incidents and had failed to devise an effective contingency plan for emergencies. He observed that special ferry service was not available even after the Bridge was re-opened. He urged the Administration to consider deploying high speed jet boats, instead of ferries which were slow, as an alternative transport means in case of full closure of transport link over land to the Airport.

8. STH said that the Administration would review how the contingency measures could be strengthened in case of closure of the land link to the Lantau Island. He advised that after the incident, the Transport Department ("TD") had urgently liaised with all public transport operators and coordinated public transport services, especially the liaison with the ferry operator concerned to provide the emergency ferry service within the specified period. Commissioner for Transport ("C for T") supplemented that it was not feasible for the operators of high speed jet boats to set aside a fleet of idle jet boats for emergencies. In addition, not every pier was suitable for berthing of high speed jet boats. As such, ferries, which could be berthed at Tung Chung Development Pier, would still be required to be chosen as an alternative transport means for emergencies.

9. The Deputy Chairman requested the Administration to have an overall review of what other transport services could be mobilized under such emergency and concurred with Mr WONG Kwok-hing's suggestion of using high speed jet boats which provided frequent service between Hong Kong and Macau. He also requested the Administration to explore the feasibility of increasing the frequency of ferry services to Mui Wo and Discovery Bay for emergencies. He asked how the operation of the Hong Kong International Airport would be affected when the full closure of the KSM Bridge was necessary under special circumstances.

10. C for T advised that TD had signed an agreement with the Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Limited ("MBTA") which would provide emergency ferry services in the territory as a kind of social service. According to the agreement, MBTA was required to set up a control centre and arrange emergency ferry services having regard to the number of

available ferries of its members upon request of TD. During the incident, the frequency of Discovery Bay ferry services between Central and Discovery Bay had been enhanced from 30-minute interval to 20-minute interval and had carried a total of about 4 500 passenger trips. She added that if the closure of the KSM Bridge was expected to last for a longer period, the existing ferry service from Tuen Mun to Tai O via Tung Chung, and Central to Mui Wo ferry service would also be strengthened to serve the affected passengers. STH added that the KSM Bridge was crucial to the operation of the Airport so the Administration would take measures to prevent the incident from happening again.

11. Mr James TO asked about the alternative transport services that could be arranged in case of full closure of the Lantau Link for a longer period, say up to eight hours, and the hourly carrying capacity, compared with the current hourly average number of people that could be carried by using the Lantau Link under normal circumstances.

Admin

12. STH agreed to provide the information requested by Mr James TO after the meeting. Chief Executive Officer of Airport Authority Hong Kong ("CEO/AA") supplemented that there was a contingency plan in place regarding the use of Skypier for emergency. In case of full closure of road link to the Airport and Skypier was designated as a non-restricted area for temporary use, a lead time was required to deploy vessels. At present, there were around 5 000 people travelling from or to the Airport per hour. Skypier would be able to handle about one-third to half of affected passengers.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information paper was issued to members on 18 July 2016 via LC Paper No. CB(4)1255/15-16(01).)*

13. Mr POON Siu-ping asked about the Administration's concrete measures to improve the contingency transport arrangement as he noted that the capacity of ferries as an alternative transport means fell short of the demand. STH said that the capacity and speed of waterborne transport, even strengthened, could not match those of land transport. The Administration considered it more important to minimize the risks of similar impact on the Bridge. He added that there were also airports in other countries, such as Kansai International Airport in Japan, which relied on a single road link to the airport. The Administration would make reference to the experience and practice of those countries.

14. DHy supplemented that the KSM Bridge and Tsing Ma Bridge were operated and managed by a management company, and Highways Department

("HyD") was responsible for overseeing the technical issues. He said that there were in place contingency measures in respect of receiving requests for conducting site inspection by HyD's staff. After the incident, several improvement measures had been or would be taken. For example, HyD was considering to provide 24-hour on duty inspection service; a report centre which received road fault reports, had been relocated to Tsing Ma Bridge to facilitate carrying out instant on-site inspection by HyD at the Bridge. HyD had also liaised with MD and the Government Flying Service to assist its personnel to arrive at the incident site when land traffic was blocked in the future.

15. Mr YIU Si-wing pointed out that the impact of the closure of the KSM Bridge was serious because it would not only affect the users of the Bridge like the residents in Tung Chung but also international travellers and operation of the Airport. He asked whether the Administration would establish an alert system and categorize the incidents relating to the KSM Bridge into different levels indicating different duration of closure such that relevant stakeholders could make judgment on the contingency measures to be taken. He also asked apart from Skypier and Tung Chung Development Pier, whether the Administration would consider making use of the abandoned pier at the Sunny Bay for emergency.

16. In reply, STH said that when the KSM Bridge was damaged, it was of paramount importance to close the Bridge for inspection. Before the completion of the inspection, it would be difficult for anyone to estimate the duration of closure. However, the Administration would review how the contingency arrangements after the activation of the alarm system could be improved.

17. C for T supplemented that the established contingency procedures would be activated in response to the initial assessment on the duration of closure. If the affected period was long and sea transport resources were adequate, the pier at the Sunny Bay, in addition to the pier at Tung Chung, could be used for emergency.

18. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung considered that the contingency plan as well as the dissemination of information to members of the public in the incident should be improved. He noted that after the closure of the KSM Bridge on the incident day, MBTA had confirmed that they were able to provide at least four sailings of emergency ferry services between Tsuen Wan West Pier and Tung Chung Development Pier at 10 pm and 10:30 pm. However, since the Lantau Link had been re-opened at around 9:40 pm that night, the planned emergency ferry services were no longer needed and the public was not informed of the

above emergency ferry service arrangements. In his view, even though the Lantau Link was re-opened, the above emergency transport service would still be required to relieve the stranded passengers. Noting that the inter-departmental meeting chaired by STH in response to the incident was only held one week after the incident, i.e. on 29 October 2015, he considered that the Administration's efficiency should be improved in this regard.

19. In response, STH said that the Administration did react expeditiously after the incident. Although the inter-departmental meeting chaired by him was held one week after the incident, the Chief Executive had indeed convened an inter-departmental meeting in the morning of 24 October 2015, the day after the incident.

20. C for T explained that since the travelling time of railway and road transport to the Airport was much shorter than that of ferries, the Administration considered that the planned emergency ferry services provided by MBTA were not needed upon the re-opening of KSM Bridge. She added that the Administration agreed that there was room for improvement in dissemination of information about the incident. During the incident, the Emergency Transport Coordination Centre ("ETCC") of TD informed the public only after it had confirmed the details of emergency transport arrangements. TD had reviewed and agreed that ETCC should have informed the public of the closure of the Bridge and the emergency transport arrangements earlier. She advised that should similar incidents happen in the future, ETCC would inform the public of the road closure as well as contact and coordinate with public transport operators and the Airport Authority Hong Kong at the same time.

21. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was not satisfied with the contingency arrangements after the incident, for example, SkyPier was not opened for emergency use and the release of information to the public was not satisfactory. He asked about the normal time required for HyD to carry out inspection in case of damage of a bridge.

22. STH explained that if HyD, after inspection of the Bridge, had assessed that the Bridge would be closed for a long time, SkyPier could be designated as a non-restricted area and temporarily used as a pier for the provision of ferry services. DHy supplemented that the time required for inspecting the damage of a bridge would depend on individual case. If there was a structural damage to a bridge, more inspection time would be required.

23. Mr Gary FAN opined that the incident had revealed that in the past 18 years, the Administration had not planned well the transport infrastructure to



accommodate demand entailed by the increase in population of Tung Chung and the usage of the Airport. He asked whether the Administration would consider permanently designating Skypier as non-restricted area and allow regular waterborne transport running between the Airport and the city as an alternative route to the Airport.

24. STH said that Skypier was currently located within the Airport Restricted Area. It provided service to transit passengers travelling between Hong Kong International Airport and the Pearl River Delta region. He reiterated that in case of emergency, SkyPier could be designated as a non-restricted area for temporary use.

25. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok considered the contingency arrangements taken by various parties pretty good and believed that the various parties had acted professionally and tried their best to carry out inspection and coordination within such a short period of time. He anticipated that if the KSM Bridge was to be closed for a longer period, Hong Kong's economy would suffer a great loss. As such, he urged the Administration to learn from the experience gained in the incident and establish a clear contingency plan involving different relevant stakeholders and to carry out regular drills in respect of the contingency arrangements.

26. Mr CHAN Kam-lam also expressed appreciation of the efforts made by various parties in taking contingency measures for the incident. He shared that a more comprehensive contingency plan should be in place for full closure of the KSM Bridge for a long duration. However, he considered that if the Bridge was to be closed for a short period of time, say two to three hours, it would be sufficient to inform the public as soon as possible about the situation.

27. Mr Albert CHAN considered that concrete arrangements on provision of emergency transport services should be set out in the contingency plan. For example, there should be a target set on the lead time required to arrange alternative transport and the kind of alternative transport to be arranged. The Administration noted his view.

#### *Drills on the contingency plans*

28. Mr POON Siu-ping, Mr YIU Si-wing and Dr KWOK Ka-ki enquired whether drills on the contingency plans for closure of the Lantau Link had been carried out in the past and how the drills would be carried out in the future.

29. CEO/AA advised that regular drills had been carried out to test the contingency plans in dealing with possible emergencies. The last drill was

conducted in January 2015. He added that there were six contingency plans having regard to the duration of closure of the KSM Bridge. If the affected period was long, it would be necessary to reduce the number of flights taking off and landing. If the contingency plan on using SkyPier was activated by the Government, the Airport Authority of Hong Kong would be able to divert passengers at the Airport to use SkyPier within two hours.

Measures to prevent recurrence of similar incidents

30. The Deputy Chairman and Mr POON Siu-ping noted that MD had planned to strengthen the marine patrol at the height restriction areas of the bridges as one of the measures to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. Mr POON was concerned over the extra manpower to be required by MD. The Deputy Chairman asked how MD would detect vessels which had exceeded the height limit and the vessel types which would exceed the height limit.

31. Atg D of M said that MD had temporarily deployed one additional patrol launch to patrol the KSM Bridge area after the incident to prevent vessels exceeding the height limit from entering the relevant waters. In the longer term, MD would seek to secure more resources to strengthen the marine patrol at the height restriction areas of the bridges. He further said that for the purpose of indicating that the crane/derrick boom of a vessel was or exceeded 35 meters, the owner of the vessel should ensure that alternate red and white strips of a length of 6 meters be marked and painted on the crane/derrick boom head of the vessel. The light erected on the crane/derrick boom would also facilitate identification at night. He added that only small vessels or river-trade vessels with a height not exceeding 41 meters would be allowed to pass under the KSM Bridge.

32. The Chairman asked whether the crane of the vessel concerned in the incident was painted with alternate red and white strips. Atg D of M answered in the affirmative. He explained that since the patrol launch was serving Ma Wan Channel when the incident took place, the patrol launch was not able to detect the vessel concerned.

33. Mr Albert CHAN urged the Administration to make use of the Ma Wan Marine Traffic Control Station to perform the monitoring work given the high cost of deploying a patrol launch. STH agreed to study Mr CHAN's suggestion.

34. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok suggested the Administration to adopt advanced technologies to prevent similar incidents from happening again. He noted that

under the existing alarm system, even if a vessel exceeding the restricted height was detected, there might not be enough time to stop the vessel.

35. Atg D of M advised that in early 2015, MD had requested a consultant to explore a device which could concisely measure the height of vessels. It was found some devices currently used in Singapore and Denmark could not accurately measure the vessel height, in particular at night or during rainy days. He said that the consultant would continue to explore such device and would approach the experts of the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong on the matter. He added that even if such device was available, whether there was suitable place to install the device would have to be considered.

Admin

36. At the request of Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, the Administration agreed to provide the result of the consultancy study, when available, on adopting suitable technological devices to detect whether the height of vessels had exceeded the height limit of the Lantau Link.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information paper was issued to members on 18 July 2016 via LC Paper No. CB(4)1255/15-16(01).)*

37. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed that even if such an alarm system was installed, it might not be able to prevent the incident from happening as it might not be able to stop a moving vessel within a short period of time. In his view, it would be more effective to educate the practitioners, tighten the height limit of the KSM Bridge area, and raise the penalty of violation to prevent similar incidents from happening again.

#### Provision of an alternative transport link to the Airport

38. The Chairman and Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether or not the Administration would consider the proposal of constructing the fifth cross harbour railway connecting the New Territories West and the Lantau Island/Airport. The Chairman considered that while taking forward the three-runway system at the Airport, the relevant authority should also consider the availability of an alternative route to the Airport in case full closure of the KSM Bridge was necessary.

39. STH said that whether or not a railway should be constructed would depend on the traffic situation, passenger throughput and the availability of alternative transport modes in the relevant districts. He said that the Railway Development Strategy 2014 had provided a framework for future expansion of Hong Kong's railway network up to 2031. While it had not suggested to

construct a railway line linking Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok, the suggestion would be considered in tandem with the future development plans of the Lantau Island and the Northwest New Territories ("NWNT"). CEO/AA supplemented that while a new contingency plan would be developed when the three-runway system was commissioned in the future, he believed that Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link ("TM-CLKL") when completed would provide an alternative route to the Airport.

40. Mr POON Siu-ping recalled that the Administration had planned to construct Route 11 to link up the North Lantau and Yuen Long. He asked about any concrete plan of the Administration in this regard.

41. STH advised that the Administration had mentioned the plan to seek necessary resources to proceed with a feasibility study of Route 11 when it consulted the Panel on Transport in July 2015 on the Administration's plans on the transport infrastructure in NWNT. He said that depending on the outcome of the feasibility study and the traffic situation in NWNT, details of Route 11 would be devised afterwards.

42. Mr Albert CHAN recalled that early in 2002, the Administration had proposed to construct Route 10 (North Lantau to Yuen Long Highway) which involved the construction of a carriageway linking the North Lantau and So Kwun Wat. He was dissatisfied that the proposal was not supported by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") and was eventually turned down by the Finance Committee. As a result, the Lantau Link had become the only road linking the Airport and the city.

43. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that Route 10 comprised two sections, namely the Southern Section—from North Lantau to So Kwun Wat; and the Northern Section—from So Kwun Wat to Yuen Long Highway. He clarified that DAB fully supported the Southern Section. As for the Northern Section, since its alignment was parallel to that of Route 3 Country Park Section which was under-utilized at that time, the construction of the Northern Section was expected to bring about intense competition on their usage. Also in view of the uncertainty over the future sites for Container Terminal 10 at that time, DAB did not support the construction of the Northern Section. He added that when the Hong Kong—Zhuhai—Macao Bridge project was planned, DAB had suggested constructing an alternative road connecting the New Territories West and the Lantau Island, and DAB's suggestion was adopted by the Administration.

**II. Any other business**

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:05 am.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
3 August 2016