

立法會
Legislative Council

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the Administration)

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Panel on Transport

**Minutes of special meeting held on
Thursday, 15 February 2018, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alvin YEUNG
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon CHAN Chun-ying
Hon LUK Chung-hung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP

Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

Members attending : Hon James TO Kun-sun
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Dr Hon CHANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon KWONG Chun-yu

Public Officers attending : **Agenda item I**

Mr Frank CHAN, JP
Secretary for Transport and Housing

Ms Mable CHAN, JP
Commissioner for Transport

Mr Kevin CHOI, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport) 2

Miss Rachel KWAN
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/
Bus & Railway

Mr Tony YAU
Chief Engineer/ Road Safety & Standards
Transport Department

Attendance by invitation : **Agenda item I**

The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited

Mr Norman LEUNG
Chairman

Mr Roger LEE
Managing Director

Mr Godwin SO
General Manager - Corporate Planning & Business
Development

Mr LEUNG Kin-wang
Operations Director

Mr Patrick PANG
General Manager (Depots)

Clerk in attendance: Mr Lemuel WOO
Chief Council Secretary (4)6

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

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (4)6

Action

- I. Issues relating to the serious traffic accident on Tai Po Road happened on 10 February 2018 involving a franchised bus**
(LC Paper No. CB(4)617/17-18(01) - Administration's paper on the bus accident in Tai Po on 10 February 2018

- LC Paper No. CB(4)617/17-18(02) - Paper on safety of franchised bus operation prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)
- LC Paper No. CB(4)617/17-18(03) - Submission from Community for Road Safety
- LC Paper No. CB(4)611/17-18(01) - Joint letter from Hon CHAN Han-pan and Hon CHAN Hak-kan dated 12 February 2018
- LC Paper No. CB(4)611/17-18(02) - Joint letter from Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho and Hon Alvin YEUNG dated 12 February 2018
- LC Paper No. CB(4)611/17-18(03) - Letter from Hon LUK Chung-hung dated 12 February 2018

The Chairman invited all attendees to stand and observe a minute of silence to commemorate and mourn those who lost their lives in the serious traffic accident on 10 February 2018 involving a bus of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited ("KMB") on Tai Po Road ("the February 10 accident") which resulted in a total of 19 fatalities and more than 60 injuries. Members also extended well wishes to the injured for their early recovery.

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the follow-up actions taken by the Administration in the aftermath of the February 10 accident; issues relating to the regulation and training of franchised bus captains; and the road safety issues at the road section where the accident took place. STH informed members that the Chief Executive had announced that an independent committee chaired by a judge would be set up to comprehensively review the operation and monitoring of franchised buses so as to ensure that the franchised bus services in Hong Kong were safe and reliable ("the Independent Committee").

3. Mr Norman LEUNG, Chairman of KMB ("Chair/KMB") then briefed members on the follow-up actions taken by KMB in the aftermath of the February 10 accident. He said that KMB would conduct an independent

internal investigation into the February 10 accident and submit a report to the Transport Department ("TD") in a month's time.

Follow-up actions in the aftermath of the February 10 accident

Investigation into the accident

4. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered it important to ascertain the causes of the February 10 accident and review the current regime on the provision of franchised bus services to avoid similar accident from recurring. He supported the setting up of the Independent Committee and hoped that it would review the occupational safety, working environment and remuneration of bus captains which, to his view, would have a bearing on the safe operation of franchised bus services. Dr CHENG Chung-tai cast doubt on the effectiveness of the work of the Independent Committee as it would be led by a judge who was not conversant with transport matters.

5. Mr Steven HO noted that KMB had set up an investigation committee for the February 10 accident ("the KMB committee") which comprised members of its senior echelon who might not have experience of using bus services. He was concerned about how to ensure that the work of the KMB committee would be effective.

6. Chair/KMB said that he was the chairman of the KMB committee, which would come up with recommendations to ensure safer driving by KMB's bus captains. He informed members that he and the other two members of the committee, who were Independent Non-executive Directors of KMB, had first-hand experience in using bus services. Two meetings had been arranged for the KMB committee to meet with the staff unions and supervisors of bus captains.

Suspension of assigning shifts to part-time bus captains

7. The Deputy Chairman, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Dr CHENG Chung-tai noted and queried KMB's decision to suspend assigning shifts to its part-time bus captains the day before today. Given the serious shortage of bus captains in the franchised bus companies, they expressed grave concerns that suspending part-time bus captains from service might increase the workload and pressure of full-time bus captains, causing more frictions between bus captains and passengers and, eventually, a negative impact on road safety.

8. Mr Roger LEE, Managing Director of KMB ("MD/KMB"), admitted that there was a serious shortage of bus captains, and the part-time bus captains had played an important role to meet the extra demand for bus services during peak hours. He explained that, as many members of the public had expressed grave concerns about the performance of part-time bus captains after the February 10 accident, KMB had suspended the hiring of and assigning shifts to part-time bus captains for the time being to address their concerns. Notwithstanding the above arrangement, KMB would ensure that appropriate working hours would be arranged for full-time bus captains.

9. Dr CHENG Chung-tai and Mr James TO asked whether KMB had ever informed or discussed with the Administration about its decision to suspend assigning shifts to part-time bus captains. In response, STH confirmed that KMB had discussed with TD on the above arrangement. He agreed that any decision on changes in bus services should be considered thoroughly and cautiously.

10. Mr LAU Kwok-fan was concerned about whether the suspension of assigning shifts to part-time bus captains was a temporary or long-term arrangement, and enquired about KMB's assessment on its impact on bus service. In reply, MD/KMB advised that that there might be lost trips for certain bus routes temporarily caused by the arrangement. He further explained that part-time bus captains were categorized into those working longer hours and those working shorter hours. As KMB had only stopped assigning shifts to those working shorter hours, he believed that the impact of the above arrangement on bus service would be minimized.

11. MD/KMB further said that KMB was discussing with TD on the feasibility of temporarily reducing the bus frequencies of some routes with low utilization to relieve the workload of full-time bus captains. STH advised that such arrangement would affect the day-time service to passengers to a certain extent.

12. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the suspension of part-time bus captains appeared to be a public relation technique rather than a well-conceived arrangement taking the safety of passengers and motorists into account. The Deputy Chairman also considered KMB's arrangement an overreaction to the February 10 accident. He requested that the arrangement should be stopped as soon as possible unless there were proven statistics showing that the rate of accident involving part-time bus captains was higher than that of full-time bus captains, or the driving attitudes and performance of part-time bus captains were poorer than that of full-time bus captains.

Psychological counselling service provided to affected people

13. Mr Kenneth LAU pointed out that victims in serious traffic accidents and their families might be suffering from long-term post-traumatic stress disorder. He asked whether psychological counselling services would be provided by the Administration to the affected people in the February 10 accident. In reply, STH advised that the Administration had assigned to each affected family a designated social worker to take care of its members' psychological needs, and to provide other follow-up services until the needs subsided.

14. The Chairman said that psychological counselling services should also be provided to bus captains and asked about KMB's work in this regard. He also hoped that the Administration would appeal to the public for not having hostile sentiments towards bus captains arising from the accident.

15. MD/KMB replied that a telephone hotline for providing psychological counselling service had been in place for bus captains in need. In addition, the management of KMB would liaise closely with the bus captains in coming days to give encouragement and boost their morale.

Admin

16. At the request of Mr Kenneth LAU, C for T agreed to liaise with the Social Welfare Department and the bus company concerned to provide information on the duration of providing psychological counselling services to people who were in need after the serious traffic accident happened on the westbound carriageway of Tuen Mun Road on 10 July 2003.

Current regime on the provision of franchised bus service

17. Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered that the February 10 accident had revealed various inadequacies of the current regime on the provision of franchised bus services, such as manpower resources, training, remuneration and working conditions of bus captains, their driving attitudes, and the bus services were lack of effective monitoring by both the franchised bus companies and the Administration. Dr LEUNG called on the Independent Committee to recommend effective measures to solve the problems of the current regime on the provision of franchised bus services.

18. Mr Steven HO was disappointed to note that, despite the recurrence of serious bus accidents in recent years, KMB had not taken effective improvement measures to address the systemic problems which had affected the performance of bus captains such as improving their working conditions.

19. Dr CHENG Chung-tai recalled that, when the Panel on Transport ("the Panel") was consulted on the proposal to grant a new franchise to KMB in 2017, the Panel had already requested the Administration and KMB to review the operation of KMB's bus services and the working conditions of bus captains. He was concerned about the progress so far.

20. Mr James TO also urged the Administration to take prompt measures to improve bus safety and should not wait until the Independent Committee had concluded its work. He considered that the Administration should provide assistance to franchised bus companies in improving the remuneration of bus captains.

21. In response, STH advised that the issues mentioned by Dr CHENG Chung-tai had been considered by the Administration during the examination of the grant of new franchise to KMB. He also agreed to the view that the Administration should make improvement measures as and when appropriate and should not wait until the Independent Committee had concluded its work.

22. STH further advised that after the February 10 accident, the Administration had been reviewing the road environment and traffic management measures of Tai Po Road. In the past few months, the Administration had also been discussing with franchised bus companies and relevant staff unions on working hours and remuneration of bus captains.

Manpower resources and the employment of part-time bus captains

23. Dr Priscilla LEUNG and Mr CHAN Hak-kan asked whether it was due to the lack of resources that KMB had employed a large pool of part-time bus captains. MD/KMB replied that the portion of part-time bus captains deployed by KMB was small. He explained that KMB had been spending its utmost effort in encouraging young people to enter the industry. However, although KMB had been improving the working environment and remuneration of bus captains in the past few years, it still encountered great difficulties in recruiting full-time bus captains. To address the problem, KMB had invited those bus captains who reached the retirement age of 60 to remain in their posts for a certain period of time.

24. MD/KMB further said that all part-time bus captains were required to hold a valid driving licence for buses and were assessed by KMB's instructors to have adequate driving ability before receiving training for two days on one route. He stressed that KMB's priority was to maintain a pool of good quality bus captains. In this regard, KMB had sought the approval from the

Administration and secured additional resources to increase the number of instructors at its training school to 80 for training bus captains.

25. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked about the number of full-time and part-time bus captains hired by KMB respectively. MD/KMB advised that part-time bus captains constituted about 4% among its pool of 8 600 bus captains.

26. Mr CHU Hoi-dick noted with concern that the number of part-time bus captains employed by KMB as at end 2015, i.e. 1 150 which constituted about 13% of the total number of bus captains, had significantly dropped to 4% at present.

27. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked whether the Administration would consider rationalizing some duplicated bus routes operated by different franchised bus companies to solve the shortage problem of bus captains. In reply, STH said that the Administration had been reviewing franchised bus services regularly, and discussing with franchised bus companies in drawing up rationalization proposals for franchised bus services under the annual Bus Route Planning Programmes. However, the Administration and franchised bus companies sometimes encountered difficulties in rationalizing bus routes during the consultation of District Councils.

Training for bus captains

28. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concerns that KMB had shortened the training period of bus captains from 30 days to 18 days, and provided route training to new bus captains for two days only. He pointed out that there was a lack of monitoring of the provision of bus captain training by the Administration. He asked the Administration to consider mandating bus captains to obtain safety permits and attend regular training workshops to be provided by the Administration.

29. Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr HO Kai-ming and Mr CHU Hoi-dick asked whether the subject bus captain in the February 10 accident had driven on the route himself under the supervision of an instructor as part of his training to familiarize the route. Mr LUK, Mr HO and Ms Claudia MO expressed grave concern over the reports that some new bus captains only learned the route by observing a fellow driver and considered the arrangement unacceptable. Mr LUK was concerned about the role of the Administration on bus captain training.

30. MD/KMB and Mr Godwin SO, General Manager-Corporate Planning & Business Development of KMB ("GM(CPBD)/KMB"), explained that both new full-time and part-time bus captains would receive training on a single bus route first. For part-time bus captains, they would receive one on one route training by an instructor for two days. After bus captains had familiarized with a single route for three months or more, those with adequate skills could learn new routes.

31. MD/KMB and GM(CPBD)/KMB further advised that for certain bus routes, bus captains would learn the route by observation through taking a bus journey of the route. Nevertheless, they stressed that all bus captains had adequate driving skills and good driving records, and route training only aimed to familiarize bus captains with the route. They said that KMB would critically review the current training provided to bus captains.

32. Mr LEUNG Kin-wang, Operations Director of KMB supplemented that the subject bus captain in the February 10 accident had received bus route training by observation through taking a bus journey of the route. He advised that as the accident was under investigation, it was inappropriate for KMB to disclose further information.

33. Mr Jeremy TAM asked whether part-time bus captains had to gain a certain number of bus driving hours within a specified period of time prior to driving a bus, and if the bus captains failed to meet the required driving hours, whether they had to undergo a re-training programme.

34. Mr Patrick PANG, General Manager (Depots) ("GM(D)/KMB") advised that if bus captains, regardless of full-time or part-time, had not driven a route for a month or more, they would have to practise driving on that route again. When arranging duties for bus captains, the supervisors would consider whether a particular bus captain had experience in driving that route in the past month before assigning him/her to that route. C for T supplemented that following the conditions of the bus franchise, the service of each bus route and the type of buses to be deployed had been specified by TD in the Schedules of Service of respective routes.

Remuneration and working conditions of bus captains

35. Dr KWOK Ka-ki, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr CHU Hoi-dick expressed grave concern that the monthly wage of KMB bus captains had far lagged behind the median monthly wage of employees in Hong Kong and those in the transport sector. Dr KWOK pointed out that, owing to the low basic salary, bus captains had to drive long hours to maintain a living. He also

considered the current guidelines on the maximum duty and driving duty for bus captains in a working day (i.e. not exceeding 14 hours and 11 hours respectively) inappropriate, and asked whether the Administration would introduce minimum wage and a cap on the working hours for bus captains.

36. Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr Holden CHOW considered that the franchised bus companies should improve the remuneration of bus captains to address the shortage and recruitment problems. Mr LUK asked whether significant improvements would be made in respect of the training and remuneration of bus captains with a view to improving their sense of belonging and morale. He also asked about the Administration's efforts to take care of the welfare for bus captains.

37. In response, STH advised that the Administration noted the views of staff unions about the working conditions and remuneration of bus captains. He said that in 2017, the Administration commenced a thorough review of the Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks ("the Guidelines"), and had engaged the staff unions and franchised bus companies for in-depth discussions. The review was nearly completed and the result could hopefully be announced after the Chinese New Year if a consensus was reached. STH added that the Administration would continue to listen to public views after the review result was announced.

38. Chair/KMB stressed that KMB was caring about its staff and had been increasing the salary of bus captains every year, even during times of financial hardship. He said that while the staff cost of KMB accounted for 58% of the total operating cost in 2016, the Board of KMB agreed in December 2017 to embed the bonus in the salary such that the basic monthly salary of bus captains would be increased to nearly \$16,000. MD/KMB supplemented that KMB would continue to improve the working conditions of bus captains, including the provision of rest rooms and washrooms at bus termini, and the improvement of remuneration for bus captains.

39. Mr CHU Hoi-dick considered that the major franchised bus operators were monopolized by private property developers who had suppressed the wages of bus captains. He asked whether the Administration would require bus operators in the franchise to provide a reasonable remuneration package with dignity to bus captains to promote bus safety.

Admin

40. At the request of Mr CHU Hoi-dick, the Administration agreed to liaise with KMB to provide information about the highest salary received by KMB staff and the basic salary of KMB's bus captains in 1998 and 2018 respectively.

41. Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered that when reviewing the working hours and remuneration of bus captains, the Administration should take into account whether the bus fares were within public affordability. In his view, by solely improving the working hours and remuneration of bus captains, it could not prevent accidents.

42. STH agreed to the view that reducing the working hours and improving the remuneration of bus captains would increase the operating cost of the franchised bus companies, and hence the pressure for fare increase. He said that the Independent Committee would consider measures to provide effective bus service to passengers, on the one hand, and a financially viable environment for bus operators, on the other.

Driving attitude of bus captains

43. Noting some reports that the February 10 accident might have been caused by the poor driving attitude of the subject bus captain after getting the blame from passengers, Ms Claudia MO asked whether the Administration would consider requiring all bus companies to deploy staff at busy bus termini to maintain the order of waiting passengers and provide assistance to them, with a view to reducing the grievances of passengers over bus services which might cause conflicts with bus captains.

44. MD/KMB advised that terminus supervisors and bus stop assistants were currently deployed at some large-scale bus termini or busy bus stops/interchanges to provide assistance to waiting passengers. He recognized that conflicts between bus captains and passengers did take place some times and assured members that KMB would work hard on addressing this problem. C for T added that TD would actively follow up with all franchised bus companies, asking them to strengthen the training of bus captains on emotion management.

45. Dr Priscilla LEUNG was concerned about whether the current training on emotion management provided to bus captains was adequate, and whether the health check package conducted for bus captains covered their mental health conditions.

46. Mr Holden CHOW pointed out that, as numerous passengers' lives were at stake, bus companies should make every effort to ensure that bus captains were in good health and mental conditions while performing their duties. He called on KMB to provide adequate training for bus captains on how to face pressure from passengers. Persons who wished to be bus captains should also be made aware of the pressure that they would face at work. Mr Steven HO

asked whether KMB would regularly make available counselling service or psychological treatment to bus captains.

47. In response, GM(D)/KMB advised that all newly recruited bus captains would receive training from experienced instructors to strengthen their emotional resilience in the face of adversity. After their first 6-month service with KMB, bus captains would attend a workshop for sharing their experience with in-service and experienced bus captains. GM(D)/KMB added that bus captains could also obtain psychological counselling service from the hotline mentioned in paragraph 15 above.

48. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was concerned that, while there were guidelines mandating sufficient rest for full-time bus captains, bus companies had little control over part-time bus captains with regard to their workload and amount of rest outside driving hours. He asked whether KMB was more lenient in monitoring the part-time than full-time bus captains, and whether part-time bus captains were mandated to declare their physical and mental health conditions regularly.

49. GM(D)/KMB advised that the supervisors of bus captains would monitor their mental and health conditions by observation. In addition, bus captains might also be required to undergo random breath tests before performing their duties.

50. Mr LAU Kwok-fan considered that traffic congestion problem might also give rise to conflicts between bus captains and passengers. He hoped that the Independent Committee would propose measures to solve a basket of problems in relation to the franchised bus service.

Traffic conviction records of bus captains

51. Mr LAU Kwok-fan noted from some reports that the bus captain involved in the February 10 accident had a record of undesirable driving behaviour in his first year of service. He was concerned about whether KMB was too lenient in allowing bus captains who had undesirable driving behavior record to continue serving passengers due to recruitment difficulties.

52. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen recalled that after the February 10 accident, KMB had once provided incorrect information regarding the driving record of the subject bus captain and could not provide statistics about the poor driving record of bus captains at the special meeting of the Tai Po District Council to discuss about the accident. Ms Claudia MO considered that it had given a bad impression to the public.

53. GM(D)/KMB expressed regret for the confusion caused by the information disseminated regarding the driving record of the subject bus captain, and said that KMB had already clarified afterwards that the subject bus captain was convicted of careless driving in August 2014. He stressed that safety had always been the prime concern of KMB in operating the bus service. In recruiting full-time or part-time bus captains, the candidates would be required to apply for certificates of traffic conviction records from the Police for KMB's examination, and there was a mechanism for handling bus captains with traffic conviction records.

54. Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr LAU Kwok-fan and Mr Alvin YEUNG asked about the details of KMB's mechanism to deal with bus captains with records of contravention of traffic regulations before and during their services with KMB. Mr CHAN also asked about KMB's measures to remind experienced bus captains to maintain a good driving attitude.

55. In response, GM(D)/KMB advised that a candidate having records of disqualification from driving or dangerous driving would not be employed by KMB as bus captain, full-time or part-time. In-service bus captains who were convicted of dangerous driving offence would be dismissed immediately. For bus captains convicted of careless driving offence, depending on its seriousness, a final written warning would be issued to them who, if committing any traffic offence again within six month after receipt of the warning, would be dismissed immediately.

56. GM(D)/KMB added that bus captains convicted of careless driving offence would have to attend a re-training programme, and would only be assigned driving duties subject to their satisfactory performance certified by instructors. KMB would also deploy plain-clothed inspectors and management staff on buses to monitor the driving attitude of the concerned bus captain and take appropriate actions once malpractice/misconduct was identified.

57. As regards whether bus captains having records of undesirable driving behaviour should not be assigned driving duties, MD/KMB said that it would require further study. He assured members that KMB would never sacrifice road safety because of manpower shortage.

Admin

58. In response to Dr Fernando CHEUNG's enquiry, MD/KMB replied that there were 236 bus captains having a careless driving record in 2016. At the request of Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, the Administration agreed to liaise with KMB and provide information on the number of traffic offences (including careless driving) committed by on-duty bus captains of KMB by categories, the types

of follow-up actions (e.g. issuance of final warnings and deploying plain-clothed staff to conduct on-board monitoring on bus captains' performance) carried out by KMB, and the number by type in the past three years.

Measures to enhance bus safety

Seat belt and places for standees

59. The Deputy Chairman suggested that, to minimize the number of casualties in case of bus accident, all franchised bus operators should consider retrofitting seat belt to all seats in buses by phases. Mr LUK Chung-hung recalled that there had been times all seats of certain bus models of Long Win Bus Company Limited ("LW") were retrofitted with seat belt. He asked why there was no such kind of buses at the moment.

60. C for T advised that all the exposed seats of new buses purchased after 2003 had been installed with seat belts. After a serious bus accident in 2007, franchised bus companies had acceded to TD's request for retrofitting seat belts to the exposed seats and front-row seats on the upper decks for buses designed after 1997. TD would, together with KMB and other franchised bus operators, actively study measures to enhance safety, including the technical feasibility of retrofitting seat belt to all seats. MD/KMB supplemented that KMB held an open mind on any suggestion to improve bus safety and would discuss the above suggestion with TD. In reply to Mr LUK Chung-hung, C for T said that LW had once proactively installed seat belts to all seats but no longer provided them having regard to the low usage.

61. Ms Claudia MO noted the view of some transport experts that seat belt might not help reduce the number of casualties for such kind of serious bus accident. She was also concerned that, in case all seats were retrofitted with seat belt, whether there would be difficulties to require all passengers to wear the seat belts. She enquired about the timetable of considering the suggestion of retrofitting all seats with seat belts and whether a consultation would be conducted in this regard.

62. C for T said that the Administration kept an open mind on the suggestion of retrofitting seat belt to all seats in franchised buses. However, apart from technical feasibility, passengers' acceptability should also be taken into account when considering the suggestion of retrofitting seat belt to all seats. It would study the investigation report to be submitted by KMB in one month's time and would examine the suggestion having regard to relevant considerations.

63. Ms Claudia MO further enquired whether the Administration would consider cancelling all places for standees on franchised buses to enhance safety. In reply, C for T advised that while the suggestion could be further discussed, cancelling places for standees might not meet the great demand for bus service.

Road design and criteria of deploying bus models

64. Mr CHAN Hak-kan noted the concerns of Tai Po residents and Tai Po District Council about the poor design of the subject section of Tai Po Road. He urged the Administration to introduce improvement measures as soon as possible, such as straightening or reducing the curvature of the road bend, applying anti-skid surface dressing and installing speed enforcement cameras on the subject road section. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok shared the view that the design of Tai Po Road, which had a lot of meandering and narrow road sections, was undesirable. He urged the Administration to review the design of the whole length of Tai Po Road and carry out necessary improvement works.

65. C for T advised that the design of the subject road section had been in compliance with the prevailing standard on road design. According to the record of TD and the Police, from 2013 to 2017, four traffic accidents had occurred at the subject road section. Out of these four accidents, three were minor accidents, and the remaining one was a serious accident involving a motorcycle.

66. C for T added that there was an established mechanism to review the safety of all roads in Hong Kong regularly. For Tai Po Road, TD and the Police would comprehensively review its road environment and relevant traffic management measures including the speed limits, warning traffic signs and road markings with a view to further enhancing road safety. She also said that TD would consult the relevant District Councils before implementing any improvement measures.

67. The Chairman suggested KMB to consult its bus captains about which road sections along Tai Po Road required improvement to expedite the review process. Mr HO Kai-ming considered that, given the poor design of Tai Po Road (Tai Po Kau Section), KMB should review whether it was appropriate to assign a part-time bus captain to drive a full-load bus along such road section.

68. Mr Kenneth LAU requested that apart from Tai Po Road, the Administration should also comprehensively review the design, speed limits,

traffic signs and locations of bus stops of Lam Kam Road, Fan Kam Road and Route Twisk, in particular the traffic blackspots of respective roads.

69. Mr Jeremy TAM enquired about the criteria for considering what suitable models of buses (such as their sizes, single-decked or double-decked) should be deployed for a particular route and requested for a copy of the guidelines, if available. In his view, the Independent Committee should review the appropriateness of the relevant guidelines.

70. Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Bus & Railway advised that before introducing a new bus route, TD would conduct a road test with the bus company concerned to determine the suitable kind of bus to be deployed for that route, having regard to the patronage and pattern of demand from passengers. She said that in any case, road safety was a prime consideration. She agreed to provide detailed information on criteria for considering the deployment of suitable models of buses as requested by Mr TAM.

Admin

Use of technologies for enhancing bus safety

71. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed concern over some reports that when the February 10 accident occurred, the subject bus was travelling at a speed above the statutory limit of 70 km/h. She asked whether the speed limiter of the subject bus was out of order, and whether the Administration would consider requiring all bus companies to install devices which could effectively control the vehicle speed when travelling on downhill roads. Dr CHIANG opined that, before all the speed limiters of buses had been replaced, the Administration should consider lowering the speed limits of those meandering or narrow road sections.

72. MD/KMB advised that every KMB bus had been installed with a speed limiter which prevented it from going faster than 70 km/h. However, when the bus was travelling downslope, the speed might exceed the above limit due to gravity. He advised that after the February 10 accident, KMB had immediately explored with a number of speed limiter suppliers on measures to address the above problem.

73. Mr Charles MOK, Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr Jeremy TAM and Mr Alvin YEUNG urged the Administration to make use of technologies to enhance bus safety and prevent accident. Mr MOK said that there had already been driver's monitoring system which could detect the driver's health or even emotional states. He also suggested making public the bus information to assist members of the public in monitoring traffic blackspots.

74. Mr LUK Chung-hung asked KMB for its reasons of not adopting the Electronic Stability Program or similar technologies to improve bus stability and prevent it from over-turning. Mr Jeremy TAM suggested the Administration and public transport operators studied the feasibility of adopting Lane Departure Warning System and Pre-Crash Safety System to enhance safety.

75. Chair/KMB and MD/KMB welcomed any suggestions from members on adoption of new technologies to improve bus safety and agreed to study their feasibility. STH added that the Administration supported the adoption of any feasible technologies to improve bus safety. He also agreed to promote the use of technology to share instant bus information to facilitate journey planning by passengers.

(At 12:24 pm, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes to 1:00 pm.)

Other views

76. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok suggested that KMB be invited to a Panel meeting in the future to report to members about the progress made in implementing the improvement measures following the review conducted by KMB on bus safety.

Motions

77. The Chairman advised that he had received three motions respectively proposed by Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr LAM Cheuk-ting. He considered that the proposed motions were directly related to the agenda item under discussion. Members agreed that the motions be proceeded with at the meeting.

78. Mr CHAN Hak-kan moved the following motion, which was seconded by Mr LAU Kwok-fan –

本會對於二月十日大埔公路發生的嚴重車禍導致十九死六十六傷深表悲痛和難過，為避免慘劇再次發生，促請當局：

- 一、要求專營巴士公司檢討車長人手編制、提供合理的車長工作、休息、用膳時間及薪酬待遇，並必須為全職及兼職車長提供恆常安全駕駛態度及培訓，以確保車長良好駕駛質素；

- 二、 立即在肇事路段鋪設防滑鋼沙、增設減速警示牌、放置偵速攝影機，並檢視全港「高危」路段及盡快提升相關安全措施，以保障道路使用者安全；及
- 三、 研究進一步加強巴士安全裝置，包括改進高危座位的保護設計、增加裝設安全帶座椅並分階段強制乘客配戴、在車長位置安裝外掛攝錄機、改進巴士限速裝置，確保高危路段安全行駛、及安裝自動緊急剎車輔助系統等等，以減低意外發生時乘客受傷的風險。

(Translation)

This Panel expresses deep sorrow and regret at the occurrence of a serious traffic accident on Tai Po Road on 10 February resulting in 19 fatalities and 66 injuries and, in order to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy, this Panel urges the Administration to:

1. request franchised bus companies to review the staffing establishment of bus captains, provide reasonable working hours, rest time, meal breaks and remuneration packages for bus captains, and provide on a compulsory basis regular training on a safe driving attitude for full-time and part-time bus captains to ensure that bus captains are equipped with the qualities of a good driver;
2. apply anti-skid surface dressing, erect additional deceleration warning signs and install speed enforcement cameras on the subject road section immediately, and review the "high-risk" road sections across the territory and expeditiously enhance the relevant safety measures to safeguard the safety of road users; and
3. explore ways to further strengthen the safety installations on buses, including enhancing the protection for high-risk seats, retrofitting seat belts on more seats and making it compulsory in phases for passengers to wear seat belts, installing an external camera at the bus captain's seat, modifying the speed limiters on buses to ensure safe driving on high-risk road sections, and installing an auxiliary system for automatic emergency braking, so as to reduce the risk of injuries among passengers in an accident.

79. The Chairman put the motion to vote. A total of 13 members voted for the motion, none voted against it and none abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

80. Mr LUK Chung-hung moved the following motion, which was seconded by Mr HO Kai-ming –

有鑒於過去本港發生多宗巴士嚴重交通意外，本會促請當局加強有關專營巴士公司對人力資源的監管，以及研究改善巴士硬件，當中包括：為巴士車長提供全面的職前線路及客服培訓、提高車長的薪酬待遇、以吸引具經驗的人才入行，進而提升整體服務質素，以保障行車安全水平。

(Translation)

Given the occurrence of a number of serious traffic accidents involving buses in Hong Kong in the past, this Panel urges the Administration to strengthen franchised bus companies' oversight of their manpower resources and explore ways to improve the hardware of buses, including providing bus captains with comprehensive pre-service training on routes and customer service, enhancing bus captains' remuneration packages to attract experienced talents to join the trade and in turn upgrading the overall service quality with a view to safeguarding driving safety.

81. The Chairman put the motion to vote. A total of 13 members voted for the motion, none voted against it and none abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

82. Mr LAM Cheuk-ting moved the following motion –

因應近年多次發生嚴重意外涉及雙層巴士，為盡量減低意外的傷亡，本會要求運輸署及巴士公司研究為所有座位加裝安全帶的可行性，加強保障乘客安全。

(Translation)

In the light of the occurrence of a number of serious accidents involving double-decker buses in recent years, and in order to minimize the casualties of accidents, this Panel requests the Transport Department and the bus companies to study the feasibility of

retrofitting all seats with seat belts so as to enhance the protection of passenger safety.

83. The Chairman put the motion to vote. A total of 13 members voted for the motion, none voted against it and none abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to the motions passed at the meeting and supplementary information paper were issued to members on 13 April 2018 via LC Paper Nos. CB(4)922/17-18(01) and (02).)

II. Any other business

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

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
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