

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(4)1186/18-19  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/TP/1

### **Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Friday, 14 December 2018, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP  
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan  
Hon Alvin YEUNG  
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin  
Hon CHU Hoi-dick

Hon HO Kai-ming  
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai  
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai  
Hon AU Nok-hin  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members attending :** Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH

**Members absent :** Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon Tanya CHAN

**Public officers attending :** **Agenda item III**  
  
Dr Raymond SO, BBS, JP  
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing  
  
Mr Kevin CHOI, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 2  
  
Ms Macella LEE  
Deputy Commissioner for Transport/  
Transport Services and Management  
  
Miss Ann CHAN  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)(Special Tasks)  
  
Ms Stella LEE  
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/  
Management and Paratransit

**Agenda IV**

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

Ms Jessica LEE Wing-tung  
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport)5

Mr Kelvin LO Kwok-wah, JP  
Project Manager/Major Works  
Highways Department

Mr Patrick LAI Kwok-fai  
Chief Engineer 4/Major Works  
Highways Department

Mr Ken YIP Kook-keung  
Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories East  
Transport Department

**Agenda V**

Ms Rebecca PUN Ting Ting, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport) 1

Ms Jessica LEE Wing Tung  
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport) 5

Mr Wilson PANG Wai Shing  
Acting Deputy Commissioner/ Planning & Technical  
Services  
Transport Department

Mr Michael LAW Hing Sun  
Assistant Commissioner/Urban  
Transport Department

Mr Eddie LEUNG Siu Kong  
Chief Traffic Engineer/ Hong Kong  
Transport Department

Mr Harry MA Hon Ngai  
Assistant Director/Development  
Highways Department

Mr CHU Shun Wah  
Principal Project Coordinator/Pedestrian Hillside Links  
Highways Department

**Clerk in attendance:** Ms Sophie LAU  
Chief Council Secretary (4)2

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Joyce CHING  
Senior Council Secretary (4)2

Ms Jacqueline LAW  
Council Secretary (4)2

Miss Mandy LAM  
Legislative Assistant (4)2

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Action

**I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

LC Paper No. CB(4)232/18-19(01) - Copy of the Entrustment Agreement signed between the Government and MTR Corporation Limited for the construction of Shatin to Central Link Project

LC Paper No. CB(4)262/18-19(01) - Administration's response to letter from Hon LUK Chung-hung requesting to discuss the utilization of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and related issues after

its commissioning

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

## **II. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(02) - List of follow-up actions

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 18 January 2019:

(a) Report of Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service; and

(b) Free-flow tolling system for Tseung Kwan O–Lam Tin Tunnel.

3. Mr Tony TSE suggested that the discussion of the item under paragraph 2(b) above should also cover the progress of the introduction of automatic toll collection system for other Government tunnels, bridges or roads. The Chairman agreed to ask the Administration to report the progress on the above subject.

## **III. Implementation of the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme**

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(03) - Administration's paper on implementation of the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(04) - Paper on Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

## Action

### Briefing by the Administration

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") briefed members on the operational details of the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme ("the Scheme"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(03)). With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) (Special Tasks) ("PASTH(T) (Special Tasks)") briefed members on the calculation of monthly public transport expenses and subsidy collection arrangement under the Scheme.

*(Post-meeting note: the powerpoint presentation material was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)351/18-19(01) on 20 December 2018)*

### Discussion

5. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, on behalf of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, Mr Kenneth LAU, Mr Frankie YICK and Mr Jeffrey LAM supported the implementation of the Scheme.

### *Implementation of the Scheme*

6. Mr LUK Chung-hung opined that the preparatory work of the Scheme had taken too long. Mr LUK hoped that the Administration would resolve all the difficulties in relation to the introduction of the Scheme with a view to ensuring its smooth implementation and operation.

7. USTH responded that the implementation of the Scheme entailed substantial preparatory work because it involved, among others, the development and upgrading of the Octopus system. Besides, the preparatory work also required a number of procedures to be taken, including obtaining funding approval for the Scheme from the Finance Committee ("FC") of the Legislative Council.

8. Mr Jeffrey LAM enquired whether the Administration would make the Scheme an on-going long-term initiative and gradually increase the subsidy amount, subject to the smooth operation of the Scheme. USTH advised that the Scheme would be implemented continuously and that the Administration would

commence the first review of the Scheme around one year after its implementation. Among others, its financial implication and the transport data collected would be examined and analysed for planning purpose.

*Coverage and subsidy level of the Scheme*

9. Mr LUK Chung-hung opined that the current eligibility threshold of \$400 for the Scheme was too high. Mr LUK called upon the Administration to lower the monthly public transport expense threshold for commuters to \$300 or below, and raising the percentage of subsidy to 33% or more and increasing the maximum amount of subsidy with a view to benefitting more commuters.

10. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed similar view on the current eligibility threshold. Dr KWOK particularly pointed out that many commuters residing in remote areas, especially in areas without coverage of railway and/or franchised bus service, could not benefit from the Scheme. Dr KWOK urged the Administration to further review the coverage and eligibility of the Scheme with a view to including as many as possible routes of red minibuses ("RMBs") and non-franchised buses ("NFBs") providing residents' services ("RS"). Dr KWOK also suggested the Administration to consider making direct transport subsidy, say a monthly amount of \$300, to commuters residing in remote areas.

11. Noting members' views and requests, USTH assured that the above said review on the Scheme would examine the operation, coverage and subsidy level of the Scheme. USTH remarked that upon the implementation of the Scheme, the Administration would continue to accept and process applications from RMBs and NFBs for joining the Scheme and currently there were still some applications being processed by the Transport Department ("TD").

12. While welcoming the expansion of the Scheme to cover other transport services, in particular NFBs providing RS and employees' services ("ES"), Mr YIU Si-wing worried that the vetting of applications from NFB operators might involve complicated procedures and it might take a long time for the Administration to process such applications. In response, Deputy Commissioner for Transport/Transport Services and Management ("DC/TSM") advised that the application process was relatively simple since TD already had the details of the routings and operation of the ES and RS routes. TD had also designated their staff to explain to interested operators on the requirements for joining the Scheme and assist them during the course of making applications.

13. Mr POON Siu-ping also observed that not many RS routes had joined the Scheme. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry, DC/TSM advised that there were a total of 88 ES routes in operation and that the TD had approved

14 ES routes for participation in the Scheme.

14. In response to members' enquiry, DC/TSM advised that a total of 8 applications from RS operators and one application from RMB operator for participation in the Scheme were being processed by TD, and that as at 7 December 2018, three applications from RMBs operators for participation in the Scheme had been rejected by TD due to their failure to meet the basic requirements. DC/TSM advised that the overall participation rate of ES, RS and RMB operators was about 10% to 16%.

15. As regards the members' opinion that the overall participation rate of ES, RS and RMBs operators was too low and the concern about the reasons for such a low participation rate, DC/TSM explained that the applications for the operators of ES and RS had to be substantiated by service contracts signed with representatives of the employers and the management/residents/owners of the residential development respectively and that the applications for joining the Scheme had to be supported by the respective representatives. DC/TSM supplemented that once the service contract issues had been resolved, more operators were expected to submit their applications for joining the Scheme.

16. DC/TSM advised that the Administration had hosted briefings on the Scheme for the operators and TD had been proactively liaising with the representatives and operators of ES and RS with a view to assisting them to join the Scheme. As for RMBs, DC/TSM further advised that many of them were not operating on fixed routes currently and that the operators of these routes might not be keen about joining the Scheme.

17. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan pointed out that currently many commuters residing in remote areas travelled to work by taking RMBs and most of which were not equipped with Octopus card processors, rendering their passengers being unable to benefit from the Scheme. Dr CHIANG then urged the Administration to provide incentives such as financial assistance to assist RMB owners to install Octopus payment system. Dr CHIANG said she planned to move a motion about this.

18. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr Frankie YICK expressed similar views and supported the above said motion. Mr YICK pointed that besides the installation of Octopus payment system, the provision of relevant operational data by the operators for monitoring purpose was also one of the requirements for joining the Scheme. Mr YICK said that he would help lobbying with NFB and RMB operators with a view to encouraging them to join the Scheme. He also hoped that the Administration could provide more assistance for operators in terms of hardware development. Mr Jeffrey LAM and Mr AU Nok-hin also urged the



Administration to take measures to encourage RMB operators to join the Scheme. DSTH(T)2 said that the Administration had been encouraging the operators to join the Scheme by providing technical assistance on matters relating to the installation of Octopus payment system and as for providing financial assistance to RMB operators to install the said system, the Administration had to give further consideration on the relevant issues.

19. Mr YIU Si-wing declared that his company operated NFB services, including the operation of the cross-boundary coach services plying between the Huanggang Control Point and various parts of Hong Kong ("the five groups (six routes)").

20. Mr YIU Si-wing opined that it was unfair to exclude the five groups (six routes) from the Scheme while covering Mass Transit Railway ("MTR") trips to and from Lo Wu or Lok Ma Chau. Mr YIU then urged the Administration to review the coverage of the Scheme with a view to including the five groups (six routes).

21. DSTH(T)2 advised that the Administration decided not to cover five groups (six routes) because the Administration's policy was to confine the scope of the Scheme to public transport services running within the boundary of Hong Kong. Any cross-boundary services, including the coach services operating via Huanggang (which was outside the boundary of Hong Kong) would not be covered by the Scheme. Nevertheless, the Administration would study the feasibility of including five groups (six routes) in the Scheme which would be reviewed around a year after its implementation.

#### *Subsidy collection arrangement*

22. Mr LAM Cheuk-ting noted that commuters might collect the subsidy of the previous month on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month. Mr LAM urged the Administration to shorten the processing time with a view to advancing the date for subsidy collection. Mr POON Siu-ping made the same request.

23. Noting that commuters would need to tap their Octopus at the designated subsidy collection points to collect the subsidy, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting queried why subsidy could not be credited to the respective Octopus card automatically. Mr CHU Hoi-dick also urged the Administration to improve the technical aspect in this regard. Mr CHU suggested the Administration to consolidate the functions of different types of machines installed at various Octopus Services Points or MTR stations with a view to making them more user-friendly.

24. PASTH(T) (Special Tasks) responded that complicated technical issues would be involved in the calculation and distribution of subsidy. Among others, uploading of the operational data to the database of Octopus system by the public transport operators would be required and that the verification of information and calculation of subsidy by the Administration would take time. PASTH(T) (Special Tasks) further advised that the Octopus system was not operating in a "real-time" mode and thus downloading of relevant data to the devices of various subsidy collection channels to facilitate subsidy collection would also be required. Taking into the account the time required for processing relevant data, the Administration considered the proposed timeframe for subsidy collection appropriate. DSTH(T)2 undertook to review the work process with a view to shortening the processing time, and to follow up on Mr CHU Hoi-dick's suggestion.

25. Upon Mr CHAN Chi-chuen's enquiry, DSTH(T)2 confirmed that commuters might also collect their subsidy of the previous month just by tapping their Octopus through the Octopus App on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month. DSTH(T)2 supplemented that the above mentioned subsidy collection function was only applicable to NFC-enabled Android mobile devices or iOS mobile devices complemented with the Octopus Mobile Reader.

26. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted that the Administration had stated in its paper that if commuters did not collect the public transport fare subsidy within three months, the subsidy could not be retrieved thereafter. Mr CHAN expressed strong view against the above arrangement and enquired for the reasons for proposing this timeframe. Mr CHAN also called upon the Administration to study the extension of the period for collecting the public transport fare subsidy to at least 12 months so as to enable more commuters who might have forgotten to collect the subsidy within 3 months to collect the relevant subsidy.

27. DSTH(T)2 advised that based on the Administration's estimate, over 2.2 million commuters would benefit from the Scheme and thus a huge amount of data would be stored in the Octopus system. Having balanced various factors, including the capability of the system for storage of such a large amount of data, the Administration considered the proposed three months' collection period would be appropriate. Nevertheless, DSTH(T)2 undertook to include the above suggestion of Mr CHAN Chi-chuen under the review.

28. In reply to Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, DSTH(T)2 confirmed that only two chained convenience stores and one supermarket had agreed so far to make available the cashiers at their outlets for subsidy collection, and that other stores/shops might join in the future.

29. Noting that registration would be required in order to link the relevant expenses of the purchase of some designated transport tickets with Octopus records, Mr YIU Si-wing worried that commuters might not be familiar with the required procedures. In response to Mr YIU Si-wing's enquiry, DSTH(T)2 advised that ambassadors would be stationed at the various Subsidy Collection Points during the initial stage of the Scheme's implementation to provide necessary assistance to commuters on matters related to subsidy collection.

30. In response to Dr CHENG Chung-tai's enquiry, DSTH(T)2 advised that any uncollected subsidy would be credited to the Government account.

*Concerns about parallel traders benefiting from the Scheme*

31. Mr Gary FAN pointed out that the Scheme might be subject to abuse by the parallel traders and members had previously suggested the Administration to take measures like mandating the commuters to use Personalised Octopus cards. In this connection, Mr FAN noted the Administration's assumption that there were about 3 000 Octopus cards held by parallel trades, and given that the subsidy was subject to a maximum of \$300 per month, the maximum amount of monthly subsidy for the above mentioned 3 000 card holders would only be \$900,000. Mr FAN opined that the Administration should ensure the prudent use of public money no matter how small the amount was and therefore urged the Administration to explore measures to avoid possible abuse.

32. Dr CHENG Chung-tai expressed similar views and made similar request. Dr CHENG also pointed out that each commuter could apply for subsidy by using several Octopus cards.

33. DSTH(T)2 emphasized that the main consideration when designing the Scheme was to make it simple, easy to understand and operate. Therefore, the Administration was of the view that additional restrictions should not be imposed on the Scheme to exclude a small group of people, which would complicate its operation and create inconvenience to the majority of the beneficiaries of the Scheme. DSTH(T)2 further said that currently most commuters were not using Personalised Octopus cards and that mandating its use might not be able to avoid possible abuse mentioned above. DSTH(T)2 supplemented that under the current design of the Scheme, commuters would still have to pay for the basic monthly public transport expenses of \$400 and 75% of the expenses exceeding \$400. The Administration considered that such arrangement should be able to minimize possible abuse of the Scheme. Notwithstanding, DSTH(T)2 assured that the Administration would closely monitor the operation of the Scheme and commence the first review around a year after its implementation to examine its

various aspects.

### *Publicity and promotion*

34. Mr Kenneth LAU asked whether the Administration would consider enhancing the publicity and promotion of the Scheme in rural areas, for instance, launching publicity campaign at New Territories Rural Committee and Village Offices. USTH responded that the Administration would actively consider ways to strengthen the publicity and promotion of the Scheme with a view to enhancing the public's understanding of the Scheme.

### Motions

35. The Chairman said that there were three motions raised by members in relation to the agenda item under discussion. The Chairman decided that the three motions were directly related to the agenda item, and members agreed to deal with them at the meeting.

36. The Chairman referred members to the following motion moved by Mr CHAN Han-pan and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan-

就改善行走非固定路線公共小型巴士(紅色小巴)付費設施，本委員會促請政府：

- (一) 明年政府推出的免入息審查公共交通費用補貼計劃，使用八達通乘搭指定交通工具包括紅色小巴，可獲補貼車費，但現時大部份紅色小巴未有安裝八達通機，未能受惠有關計劃。政府應提供誘因如金錢資助，協助紅色小巴車主安裝八達通機；
- (二) 當全數或大部份紅色小巴加裝八達通機後，政府下一步應將長者兩元乘車優惠擴展至紅色小巴；及
- (三) 設立調查和跟進投訴機制，定期檢測紅色小巴上的八達通機有否被濫用，並加強宣傳避免濫用。

(Translation)

In respect of improving the payment facilities on public light buses operating on non-scheduled routes (red minibuses ("RMBs")), this Panel urges the Government to:

- (1) provide incentives such as financial assistance to assist RMB owners to install Octopus card processors in view that the Government will introduce a non-means tested Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme next year to provide fare subsidy to commuters who use Octopus cards to travel on designated modes of public transport, including RMBs, but most RMBs are currently not equipped with Octopus card processors, rendering their passengers unable to benefit from the Scheme;
- (2) extend the application of the \$2 concessionary fare enjoyed by the elderly to RMBs when all or most RMBs are installed with Octopus card processors; and
- (3) establish a mechanism for investigating and following up complaints and conduct regular inspection to see if Octopus card processors on RMBs have been abused, and step up publicity against such abuse.

37. The Chairman put the motion to vote and ordered a division. A total of 10 members voted for the motion, none voted against it and none abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

38. The votes of individual members were as follows:

*For*

Mr Jeffrey LAM	Mr Andrew WAN
Mr Frankie YICK	Mr LUK Chung-hung
Mr CHAN Chi-chuen	Mr Kenneth LAU
Mr POON Siu-ping	Mr Jeremy TAM
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan	Mr Gary FAN

(10 members)

39. The Chairman referred members to the following motion moved by Mr LUK Chung-hung-

有鑒於現時符合公共交通費用補貼計劃(計劃)的門檻高、並訂定補貼金額的百分比及補貼金額上限，或令短、中途的乘客受惠有限；因此，本人要求政府優化計劃，包括降低符合計劃的門檻，即降低至市民每月公共交通開支300元或更低金額、提高補貼金額的百分比至最少為三分之一、以及補貼金額上限，從而讓更多市民受惠。

(Translation)

As the current eligibility threshold for the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme ("Scheme") is high with the percentage and maximum amount of subsidy being set, rendering short-haul and medium-haul commuters unable to benefit much from the Scheme, I call upon the Government to enhance the Scheme by lowering the monthly public transport expense threshold for commuters to \$300 or below, and raising the percentage of subsidy to 33% or more and increasing the maximum amount of subsidy with a view to benefitting more commuters.

40. The Chairman put the motion to vote and ordered a division. A total of 7 members voted for the motion, none voted against it and 3 members abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

41. The votes of individual members were as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Mr CHAN Chi-chuen	Mr Jeffery LAM
Mr POON Siu-ping	Mr Frankie YICK
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan	Mr Kenneth LAU
Mr Andrew WAN	(3 members)
Mr LUK Chung-hung	
Mr Jeremy TAM	
Mr Gary FAN	
(7 members)	

42. The Chairman referred members to the following motion moved by Mr CHAN Chi-chuen-

鑒於當局在文件中表示，如市民未有在三個月限期前領取公共交通費用補貼，該市民便無法取回補貼，此等安排可能會令部份忘記領取補貼的市民不能領取補貼，本委員會要求當局應研究將領取公共交通費用補貼的期限延長至12個月，讓更多忘記領取的公共交通費用補貼的市民可領取相關補貼金額。

(Translation)

As the Administration has stated in its paper that if commuters fail to collect the public transport fare subsidy within a period of three months, they cannot claim the subsidy after that period, and such arrangement may render some commuters who have forgotten to collect the subsidy unable to do so, this Panel requests that the Administration should study the extension of the period for collecting the public transport fare subsidy to 12 months so as to enable more commuters who might have forgotten to collect the subsidy within 3 months to collect the relevant subsidy.

43. The Chairman put the motion to vote and ordered a division. A total of 6 members voted for the motion, none voted against it and 3 members abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

44. The votes of individual members were as follows:

*For*

Mr CHAN Chi-chuen

Mr POON Siu-ping

Dr CHIANG Lai-wan

Mr Andrew WAN

Mr Jeremy TAM

Mr Gary FAN

(6 members)

*Abstain*

Mr Jeffery TAM

Mr Frankie YICK

Mr Kenneth LAU

(3 members)

#### **IV. 6863TH – Widening of western section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Ping Yuen River and Ping Che Road**

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(05) - Administration's paper on 6863TH – Widening of western section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Ping Yuen River and Ping Che Road

45. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1 ("DSTH(T)1") briefed members on the funding application of the project on widening of western section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Ping Yuen River and Ping Che Road ("the Project"). She said that

subject to the approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") of the Legislative Council ("LegCo"), the Administration planned to commence construction of the section in the second half of 2019 for completion by the fourth quarter of 2023.

46. Chief Engineer 4/Major Works of Highways Department ("HyD") introduced the project scope with the aid of the powerpoint presentation.

*(Post-meeting note: the powerpoint presentation material was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)351/18-19(02) on 20 December 2018)*

#### Declaration of interests

47. Mr Kenneth LAU declared that his family possessed land in the vicinity of the Project.

#### Construction cost of the Project

48. The Deputy Chairman, Mr Alvin YEUNG and Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern over the high construction cost of the project. They opined that the scope of the Project mainly involved widening of a road section of 750 metres long only, but the cost of the Project was estimated to be \$432.3 million in money-of-the-day prices. The members sought reasons for the high cost, and requested cost information of similar projects for comparison.

49. Project Manager/Major Works of Highways Department ("PM/HyD") explained that the estimate of the Project was derived based on previous construction projects undertaken by HyD, and was approximately 10% higher than the cost of similar projects mainly due to the following reasons:

- (a) the remote location of the Project with some of its section (i.e. the new vehicular bridge) lying within the current Frontier Closed Area;
- (b) apart from widening Lin Ma Hang Road, a new bridge across Ping Yuen River would be constructed at the western section of the road, of which the foundation and pier works could only be carried out during dry seasons to avoid affecting the flow of the river;
- (c) it was necessary to re-construct the concerned section of Lin Ma Hang Road in addition to the widening works because the new road alignment would generally follow the existing road so as to



minimise land resumption and prevent clearance of residential settlement; and

- (d) the need for maintaining 24-hour security measures for works within the Frontier Closed Area, such as erecting fencing at the construction site to prevent trespassing.

50. As regards cost information of similar projects requested by members, DSTH(T)1 undertook to provide relevant information after the meeting.

51. Mr Alvin YEUNG further requested that the Administration should provide clear breakdown of the cost of the Project when the financial proposal was to be submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee and FC for LegCo members' consideration. PM/HyD agreed to provide the requested information. Mr YEUNG also enquired about the construction timetable and cost for the eastern section of Lin Ma Hang Road. PM/HyD said that as the eastern section would fall within a site of special scientific interest and was a designated project under Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499), an Environmental Review, which was now underway, was necessary before works commencement. The scope and timetable of the project would depend on the outcome of the Review.

52. Dr KWOK Ka-ki enquired whether the Administration had considered the impact of flooding during the construction of the bridge. PM/HyD replied that the location was not a flooding blackspot listed under the Drainage Services Department. For the construction works of the bridge, HyD had conducted drainage impact assessment at Ping Yuen River to ensure that the foundation works of the bridge would not adversely obstruct the flow of the river.

#### Public consultation on the Project

53. Mr Kenneth LAU complimented the Administration for having conducted a comprehensive consultation with local communities, which reflected their respect of local views. Noting that the Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee and the Traffic and Transport Committee of North District Council had been consulted in early 2016, Mr LAU asked for the response and the number of participants joining the consultation, and whether any adverse comments had been received.

54. PM/HyD replied that in total 110 opinion forms had been received during the six-week consultation period. The public in general supported the implementation of the Project, and expressed the views that the Project should

avoid clearance of residential settlement and that more pedestrian crossings should be provided.

### Environmental Implications of the Project

55. Referring to paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper, Mr POON Siu-ping asked how the Administration would ensure the reduction of construction waste and the use of recycled construction materials by contractors, and whether such requirements would be incorporated into the tender documents for contractors' compliance.

56. In reply, PM/HyD said that the Administration would stipulate in the contract documents the requirement of reducing the generation of construction waste and the use of recyclable inert construction materials as far as practicable. The contractors would be encouraged to separate the inert portion from non-inert construction waste on site so as to minimise construction waste disposal at public fill reception facilities and landfills.

57. Mr Kenneth LAU enquired whether the Administration would implement measures to mitigate nuisances caused by the construction works to nearby residents. PM/HyD replied that HyD would implement mitigation measures, such as using temporary noise barriers and frequent cleaning and regular water spraying at works site to minimise noise and dust nuisances to residents.

### Traffic congestion problem in the North District

58. Mr LAM Cheuk-ting welcomed the Administration's proposal to alleviate traffic congestion problem in the North District. He asked about additional measures to improve the congestion problem within the North District such as Fanling and Sheung Shui.

59. Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories East of Transport Department ("CTE/TD") replied that the Administration would explore the transport infrastructure required in each district in a holistic manner in the future "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" having regard to the distribution of population and employment. In addition, the Administration had plans for the construction of roads under the Northeast New Territories New Development Areas project, including Fanling North and Kwu Tung North New Development Areas, and would seek necessary funding approval from FC of LegCo within 2019.

60. At the request of Mr LAM, CTE/TD agreed to provide relevant information regarding the construction of roads in the Northeast New Territories to the Panel after the meeting.

#### Other issues

61. Dr KWOK Ka-ki asked whether there was an increase in the number of small house applications near Lin Ma Hang Road in tandem with the widening project. DSTH(T)1 said that she would seek the information from relevant bureau/department and provide the information to the Panel after the meeting.

#### Conclusion

62. The Chairman sought members' views on the funding application of the Project. Members indicated support to the application.

### **V. Review of Assessment Mechanism for Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems Proposals**

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(06) - Administration's paper on review of assessment mechanism for hillside escalator links and elevator systems proposals

LC Paper No. CB(4)288/18-19(07) - Paper on review of assessment mechanism for hillside escalator links and elevator systems proposals prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

63. At the invitation of the Chairman, DSTH(T)1 briefed members on the proposed revisions to the assessment mechanism for hillside escalator links and elevator system ("HEL") proposals. Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong of the Transport Department introduced details on the proposed revisions with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

*(Post-meeting note: The powerpoint presentation materials were issued to members on 20 December 2018 vide LC Paper No. CB(4)351/18-19(03))*

*(At 12:19 p.m. , the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes to allow sufficient time for discussion on the present item.)*

### Implementation progress of the 18 Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems Proposals

64. The Chairman, Mr SHIU Ka-fai, Mr Wilson OR, Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr LAM Cheuk-ting expressed grave concern about the slow implementation progress of the 18 HEL proposals, which were shortlisted for prioritized implementation since 2008. The members considered it unacceptable that only three proposals were completed and opened for public use in ten years' time since 2008. In addition, they expressed strong dissatisfaction that despite the slow progress in the past, the Administration could not provide a definite completion time for the remaining 15 proposals. They requested the Administration to review the reasons for the prolonged delay and to implement immediate measures to expedite the completion of the remaining proposals.

65. The Chairman added that the three completed systems mentioned above were constructed with the assistance of other public organizations including Hospital Authority, Urban Renewal Authority and MTR Corporation Limited, who had undertaken their own works projects concurrently at the relevant sites. He was worried about the capability of the Highways Department ("HyD") in implementing the HEL projects, not to mention the new 114 HEL proposals received in the past few years. He said that the subcommittee on HEL formed under the Panel was expected to commence its work in March 2019 to closely monitor the implementation progress of HEL proposals.

66. DSTH(T)1 explained that in taking forward the HEL proposals, it was necessary for the Administration to ascertain technical details including possible alignments, whether to opt for escalator or elevator system at the relevant locations, as well as to consult the views of the locals and liaise with relevant government departments and public utility companies regarding the location of underground utilities. Considerable time was required in carrying out the above tasks, and to sort out complicated issues such as resolving the objections received from local communities on the proposals. That said, the Administration would expedite actions to resolve the difficulties encountered in order to speed up the delivery of the projects. In assessing the 114 new HEL

proposals received, the Administration planned to adopt the revised assessment mechanism such that those proposals which were obviously infeasible or unjustified would be screened out, followed by a more comprehensive preliminary technical assessments in order to better ascertain the feasibility of the proposals at an early stage so as to facilitate the subsequent implementation of the proposals.

67. Mr SHIU Ka-fai was deeply concerned about the slow progress in taking forward the pedestrian link system at Braemar Hill of the Eastern District. He said that even though the proposal ranked the second amongst the 18 HEL proposals, the project was still at the stage of planning, investigation and design with little progress made over the past ten years.

68. Sharing similar concern, Mr Wilson OR and Mr LAM Cheuk-ting enquired about the implementation progress of the four HEL proposals in Kowloon East district and the two HEL proposals in Sha Tin district respectively. In addition, Mr LAM pointed out that despite the existence of an elderly centre near the Saddle Ridge Garden, the proposal of lift and pedestrian walkway system between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road ranked only 16. He asked about the rationale for coming up with the final scores and the resultant rankings of the system mentioned.

69. DSTH(T)1 responded that for the proposed pedestrian link system at Braemar Hill, diverse views from local residents had been received, and HyD had been liaising closely with the local community to address residents' concerns. Once an agreement on the alignment was reached, the Administration would seek funding approval from the Legislative Council to commence the works of the project as soon as practicable. As regards the enquiries raised by Mr OR and Mr LAM, DSTH(T)1 undertook to provide the information after the meeting.

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70. The Chairman did not subscribe to the Administration's explanation that project delays were attributable to the diverse views received from local communities on the proposals. He opined that to save time, technical assessments and local consultations of the proposals could take place concurrently. DSTH(T)1 replied that the Administration would, in future, conduct a comprehensive preliminary technical assessment on the proposals at the initial stage so as to expedite the project delivery during the subsequent planning and design stage.

Revised assessment mechanism for Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems Proposals

71. Mr Gary FAN recalled that when funding application to take forward HEL proposal at Shek Lei I Estate was discussed at a FC meeting in June 2018, there were concerns over the need for the Administration to resume land within public rental housing estate as the relevant land section was owned by a private real estate investment trust funds. Under the revised mechanism in assessing HEL proposals, Mr FAN enquired whether the necessity for land resumption would be a key factor when considering the feasibility of a proposal.

72. Acting Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical Services of the Transport Department replied that under the revised assessment mechanism, HEL proposals with inadequate land or infeasible land resumption for the construction of required facilities would be screened out during the initial screening stage. In addition, during the detailed scoring stage, proposals involving land resumption would be accorded lower score under the criteria of "Implementation Readiness" such that proposals with maximum social benefits and cost effectiveness would be identified for implementation as early as practicable.

73. Mr Wilson OR expressed disappointment that estates under Tenants Purchase Scheme ("TPS") were excluded. Citing a pedestrian walkway in Tak Tin Estate with immense pedestrian flow and high ratio of elderly users as an example, Mr OR said that the Administration should consider including walkways in TPS estate as new HEL proposals.

74. Noting from paragraph 5 of the Administration's paper that a consultancy study was commenced in December 2017 to screen, shortlist and prioritize the 114 HEL proposals received in the past few years and that it would take around 30 months to complete the study, Mr POON Siu-ping opined that the time required was far too long. He asked in what ways the Administration could expedite the progress, such as increasing manpower to screen and process the proposals.

75. DSTH(T)1 replied that in respect of the 114 HEL proposals received in the past few years, the Administration planned to conduct preliminary technical assessments and draw up proposed alignments in parallel with initial screening and scoring on the "Social Benefits" aspects of the proposals in 2019. Local consultations for proposals with higher "Social Benefits" scores would commence in early 2020. Prioritization of proposals with higher scores in both "Social Benefits" and "Cost-effectiveness" aspects would take place within 2020 so as to come up with the first batch of proposals for implementation from 2021 onwards.

76. With regard to assessing the "Convenience" aspect of a HEL proposal, the Chairman sought the reasons why HEL proposals which were connected with existing major public transport facilities only scored 4 points at most, given that the pedestrian flow at those locations would be high. He suggested the Administration according higher scores to HEL proposals that were connected with facilities of high pedestrian flow such as public markets. DSTH(T)1 took note of the Chairman's suggestion and said that anticipated pedestrian flow would also be taken into account in assessing the "Social Benefits" aspect of a HEL proposal.

#### Ventilation of lifts

77. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern over the lack of air-conditioning system inside tall lifts. Assistant Director/Development of Highways Department replied that for environmental reasons, HyD had adopted mechanical ventilation in place of air-conditioning for new lift installations. The mechanical ventilation system would enhance circulation within the lifts such that temperature inside lift cars would be more or less the same level as outside temperature.

#### **VI. Any other business**

78. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:54 pm.