

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(4)804/19-20  
*(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)*

Ref : CB4/PL/TP/1

### **Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of meeting  
held on Friday, 20 March 2020, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
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 LAM Cheuk-ting  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon Tanya CHAN  
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP

Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH  
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai  
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members attending :** Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding

**Members absent :** Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS  
Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP

**Public officers attending :** **Agenda item III**

Mr Raymond SY  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport)5

Mr LUK Wai-hung, JP  
Project Manager/Major Works  
Highways Department

Mr WOO Kwong-po  
Chief Engineer 4/Major Works  
Highways Department

Mr CHOW Bing-kay  
Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West  
Transport Department

**Agenda item IV**

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

Ms Jerry JI  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport) 1

Ms Candy KWOK  
Assistant Commissioner/Management and  
Paratransit  
Transport Department

Ms Winnie WONG  
Principal Transport Officer/Urban  
Transport Department

Mr William SHUM  
Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/Vehicle  
Safety and Standards  
Transport Department

**Agenda item V**

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

Ms Macella LEE, JP  
Deputy Commissioner / Transport Services and  
Management  
Transport Department

Ms Jerry JI  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport) 1

Mr Patrick WONG  
Assistant Commissioner / Bus and Railway  
Transport Department

Mr William SHUM  
Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer / Vehicle  
Safety and Standards  
Transport Department

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

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Angela CHU  
Senior Council Secretary (4)2

Miss Mandy LAM  
Legislative Assistant (4)2

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

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|---------------------------------|--|
| LC Paper No. CB(4)271/19-20(01) | - Information paper on fares of Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 provided by MTR Corporation Limited           |
| LC Paper No. CB(4)57/19-20(01)  | - Joint submission from non-franchised bus unions requesting to raise the level of one-off subsidy |

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

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

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(01) | - List of outstanding items for discussion |
| LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(02) | - List of follow-up actions                |

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 24 April 2020:

- (a) MTR Fare Adjustment for 2020; and
- (b) Comprehensive review of private driving instructors' licences.

### **III. 6853TH – Widening of Castle Peak Road – Castle Peak Bay**

- LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(03) - Administration's paper on 853TH - Widening of Castle Peak Road - Castle Peak Bay
- LC Paper No. CB(4)387/19-20(01) (English version only) - Submission from an elected member of Tuen Mun District Council on the widening of Castle Peak Road - Castle Peak Bay
- LC Paper No. CB(4)408/19-20(01) (English version only) - Submission from a member of the public on the widening of Castle Peak Road - Castle Peak Bay
- LC Paper No. CB(4)408/19-20(02) - Submission from the Chairman of Hong Kong Gold Coast Owners Committee on the widening of Castle Peak Road - Castle Peak Bay

#### Briefing by the Administration

3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)5 ("PAS(T)5") briefed members on the funding application for upgrading 853TH "Widening of Castle Peak Road – Castle Peak Bay" ("CPR - CPB") to Category A. Details of the briefing were set out in the Administration's paper. PAS(T)5 said that subject to the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in the current

legislative session, the Highways Department (“HyD”) would commence the proposed works in the second half of 2020 for completion by the second quarter of 2024.

4. Project Manager/Major Works of HyD (“PM/HyD”) supplemented the details of the project with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

### Discussion

#### *Traffic volume of CPR - CPB*

5. Having noted that the scope of the widening of CPR – CPB project involved improvement works to Tsing Ying Road roundabout, Mr Michael TIEN opined that traffic congestion in the relevant section of CPR was mainly caused by heavy traffic during morning peak hours near a school which was located in the vicinity of the roundabout. He enquired whether the Administration would accord priority to the improvement works to the roundabout, or consider constructing a bypass or underpass near the relevant road section so as to alleviate the traffic burden during peak hours.

6. PM/HyD responded that HyD had scheduled to carry out the improvement works to Tsing Ying Road roundabout during the early stage of the works. Owing to circumstantial limitations, it was not technically feasible to construct a bypass or underpass at the relevant road section. PM/HyD added that upon completion of the widening of CPR – CPB from a single two-lane to a dual two-lane carriageway, it was anticipated that the volume/capacity (“v/c”) ratios of CPR – CPB would be much improved.

7. Mr Andrew WAN said that when the Administration consulted the Tuen Mun District Council (“TMDC”) on the project in 2012, the v/c ratio of CPR-CPB quoted by the Administration was projected to be 1.30 by 2021, whereas the latest estimation of the v/c ratio as shown in the Administration's paper had been adjusted downward to 0.88 at present. He enquired about the reasons for the discrepancy in the projected figures.

8. Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West of Transport Department (“CTE/TD”) advised that the v/c ratios adopted during earlier consultation with TMDC and those presented in the Administration’s paper were based on traffic impact assessments conducted by the consultants at different time junctures. At the request of Mr WAN, the Administration undertook to provide a written response to further elaborate the differences in the v/c ratios after the meeting.

(*Post-meeting note:* the Administration' response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)571/19-20(01) on 15 May and 20 May 2020.)

9. Regarding v/c ratios of CPR – CPB, Mr Tony TSE asked if the ratios cited in the Administration's paper had taken into account the traffic situation of Tuen Mun Road ("TMR"), the possible traffic diversion from TMR to CPR, and the increase in traffic arising from future housing development projects in Tuen Mun. Mr TSE also asked about the mitigation measures to minimize the impact caused to the traffic of CPR during construction.

10. CTE/TD replied that according to the latest traffic impact assessment, the traffic situation of adjacent roads including TMR had been taken into account. At the request of Mr TSE and the Chairman, the Administration agreed to provide written information on the v/c ratios of TMR from now on until 2031, and the population growth arising from the housing development projects in the area in the coming 10 years after the meeting.

(*Post-meeting note:* the Administration' response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)571/19-20(01) on 15 May and 20 May 2020.)

11. As regards measures to mitigate the impact of the construction works on the traffic of CPR, PM/HyD said that HyD would undertake widening of the road section before any closure of traffic lane(s) so as to minimize the impact caused to the traffic during construction.

12. In reply to Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's enquiry on the projected reduction in v/c ratio from 0.88 at present to 0.54 in 2024 upon the completion of the project, PM/HyD said that the significant reduction was a result of the widening of CPR – CPB from a single two-lane carriageway to a dual two-lane carriageway and the improvement works of nine existing road junctions and a roundabout.

13. Noting that HyD had consulted TMDC on the project in 2012, Mr POON Siu-ping asked if the Administration had any plan to consult the newly elected DC members again on the project. PAS(T)5 replied that the Administration had been adhering to the established practices by consulting TMDC on the project scheme in 2012 and obtained their support to the proposed works in 2019. HyD would maintain close contact with TMDC and provide updates on the progress of the project.

14. Mr Holden CHOW opined that Transport Department ("TD") and

HyD should closely monitor the traffic situation of CPR – CPB upon completion of the project, and be ready to undertake further improvement works should the v/c ratios did not improve as expected. The Chairman concurred and added that the Administration should report to the Panel the traffic situation of CPR and TMR six months after the completion of the project. The Administration took note of members' suggestion.

*Adoption of noise-barriers at nearby residential estates*

15. Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired about the criteria in determining the adoption of noise barriers or enclosures at nearby residential estates for works projects. He observed that in some occasions, noise barriers were provided for nearby small private residential estates but not for densely populated public housing estates. Mr Andrew WAN shared a similar view.

16. In addressing members' enquiry above, PM/HyD clarified there was an established mechanism for determining the provision of noise barriers or enclosures for new works projects and existing roads. Factors including size of the affected area, height of relevant buildings and level of noise impact would be taken into account in the assessment. Under this project, noise barriers and semi-enclosures would be provided to mitigate the noise impact on nearby residents including those of Sam Shing Estate.

17. Ms Claudia MO and Mr Andrew WAN noted that residents of the Hong Kong Gold Coast ("HKGC") raised strong objection to the construction of noise barrier outside HKGC and requested planting of trees to minimize noise impact of the construction works instead. Ms MO asked the Administration to pay heed to residents' views and consider other mitigating options.

18. PM/HyD explained that HyD was aware of the views of residents of HKGC regarding the proposed erection of noise barrier outside HKGC. Notwithstanding the scheme of the project had already been authorized in accordance with the Road (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance, HyD would maintain close dialogue with residents of HKGC with a view to reaching a consensus.

*Other issues*

19. Dr CHENG Chung-tai observed that, at present, some bus stops were at less convenient locations and as a result, some passengers chose to cross the roads at where there were no traffic lights to reach the bus stops. He urged the Administration to consider this issue when considering the



relocation of bus stops or routing of buses. PM/HyD replied that the Government would accord the highest priority to road safety when determining relocation of bus stops and ensure that there would be traffic lights or footbridge nearby.

20. Dr CHENG noticed that the proposed noise enclosure was to be built below the existing footbridge at Sam Shing Estate and sought clarification in this regard. PM/HyD explained that due to geographical constraint posed by the existing footbridge at Sam Shing Estate, it was necessary to build the noise enclosure in the proposed manner.

21. Noting that a lift would be retrofitted at each end of the footbridge, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok enquired whether two lifts could be retrofitted on each end of the footbridge to facilitate residents of Sam Shing Estates. PM/HyD explained that apart from the proposed lifts (one at each end of the footbridge), there was a pedestrian crossing in near distance to facilitate pedestrians crossing the road. Nevertheless, noting Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok's concern, HyD would further review if two lifts could be retrofitted on each end of the footbridge taking into account of the actual site condition.

22. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung noted that around 200 palm trees would be planted in the new dual two-way carriageway of CPR – CPB, he asked if sun-shading trees could be planted instead. PM/HyD said that palm trees would be planted in the middle of the carriageway and sun-shading trees would be planted on the two sides of the carriageway to benefit drivers and pedestrians.

### Conclusion

23. The Chairman concluded that members raised no objection for the Administration to submit the funding application of the project to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration. The Chairman also reminded the Administration to provide the supplementary information as requested by members at the meeting, and to report to the Panel traffic situation of CPR six months upon the completion of the project.

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## **IV. Relaxation of vehicle length restriction of light bus and other relevant technical amendments**

LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(04) - Administration's paper on relaxation of vehicle length restriction of light bus and

other relevant technical amendments

- LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(05) - Information note on relaxation of vehicle length restriction of light bus and other relevant technical amendments

### Briefing by the Administration

24. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)2 ("DS/T(2)") briefed members on the proposed legislative amendments to relax the vehicle length and weight restrictions of light buses so that light bus models with more environmental benefits and/or barrier-free facilities could be introduced into Hong Kong. Details of the briefing were set out in the Administration's paper. Subject to members' comments on the legislative proposals, the Administration would seek to amend relevant legislations for implementation by mid-2020.

### Discussion

#### *Relaxing vehicle length and weight restrictions of light buses and promoting greener and wheelchair-accessible models*

25. Mr Andrew WAN supported the Administration's proposal of relaxing the vehicle length of public light buses. On consideration of better utilization of limited road space and to further strengthen the role of public light bus amongst different transport trades, Mr WAN called on the Administration to consider relaxing the maximum seating capacity of public light buses from 19 to 20 or more so that their carrying capacity could be further enhanced. Mr Wilson OR also shared similar views.

26. DS/T(2) pointed out that the proposed legislative amendments sought to amend relevant sections of the subsidiary legislation of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) relating to the statutory vehicle length and gross weight restrictions in favour of the introduction of light bus models with more environmental benefits and/or barrier-free facilities into Hong Kong. As relaxing the seating capacity of public light bus would involve other policy considerations, the Administration would need to carefully consider the suggestion having regard to the delicate balance of different transport trades, impact to other public transport operators and so forth.

27. Ms Claudia MO enquired about the reasons for strictly specifying the restrictions of 7.5 metres in length and 8.5 tonnes in gross weight in the proposed legislative amendments. She noted that the length and gross weight of light bus models deployed under the “low-floor wheelchair-accessible light bus trial scheme” exceeded the proposed restrictions. Ms Claudia MO also asked whether there were other considerations like the provision of parking space at public light bus termini. She wondered whether it was the Administration’s plan to exclude certain light bus models and if the Administration had kept a preferred list of light bus models for introduction into the market.

28. DS/T(2) responded that the Administration maintained an open mind on the types of light bus to be introduced as long as they could bring environmental benefits to the community or could serve persons with disabilities. In order to encourage the wider use of barrier-free light bus and to review their efficiency and effectiveness, the Administration launched the light bus trial scheme for two hospital routes since January 2018. If the scheme was proven to be operationally feasible and desirable after review, the Administration would discuss with the public light bus trade on ways to further promote low-floor light buses. As regards models that exceeded the proposed length and weight restrictions, DS/T(2) added that the Commissioner for Transport had the discretion for granting exemptions to vehicles from complying with the requirements under Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles Regulation (Cap. 374A) if the vehicles could provide services to meet special transport needs of people with disabilities or with other greener benefits. At the request of Ms MO, DS/T(2) undertook to provide written information to the Panel details of light bus models with environmental benefits and/or barrier-free facilities available in the market after the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: the Administration' response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)478/19-20(01) on 16 April 2020.)*

29. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that there were several light bus models prevalent in the European Union that met the proposed vehicle length and weight restrictions, but unlike the light buses commonly used in Hong Kong which had the entrance near the middle on the side of the vehicle, the door of these models was located near the front part of the vehicle. This design might pose inconvenience to passengers when boarding and alighting the light buses. He suggested the Administration to keep in view models with different designs and to discuss with the trade on suitable models to be introduced. DS/T(2) took note of Dr CHENG’s opinion.

30. In reply to Mr Jeremy TAM's enquiry on the reasons for relaxing the gross vehicle weight of a light bus from 5.5 tonnes to 8.5 tonnes which nearly doubled the original weight restrictions, DS/T(2) replied that having regard to light bus models available in the market and to encourage the use of electric light buses which were usually heavier due to the weight of the batteries, the Administration proposed the new weight restrictions of 8.5 tonnes. In addition, vehicles of up to 8.5 tonnes were able to manoeuvre on the majority of public roads in Hong Kong.

31. Dr CHENG Chung-tai asked if it would be difficult for the longer light bus to park and manoeuvre at public light bus termini or public transport interchanges in districts where traffic was heavy. Mr Wilson Or and Mr Tony TSE also enquired when TD would undertake modification works to existing road sections to facilitate longer light buses. DS/T(2) responded that TD had examined public transport interchanges, public light bus termini and road sections where green minibuses ("GMBs") operated, and had commenced feasible modification works at the relevant sites to ensure that longer light buses would be able to park and manoeuvre. However, as modification works might not be conductible at some of the sites due to circumstantial restrictions, TD would carry out remedial arrangements, including but not limited to erecting road signs to restrict the entrance of longer length vehicles, and if necessary make further arrangements to the alighting/drop-off points of individual public light bus routes to accommodate operational needs. At the request of Dr CHENG, DS/T(2) agreed to provide written information on the number of public transport interchange and public light bus termini that could not accommodate public light buses of more than 7.5 metres and the modifications that had been/would be made.

*(Post-meeting note: the Administration' response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)478/19-20(01) on 16 April 2020.)*

32. In reply to Mr Jeremy TAM's question on the necessity of amending other legislations to cater for the new road signages on the proposed length and weight restrictions of light buses, DS/T(2) said that the Administration would carefully consider if it was necessary to introduce relevant technical amendments to other legislation when submitting the legislative proposals to the Legislative Council for scrutiny.

33. Noting that light bus with environmental benefits and/or barrier-free facilities would induce higher cost for light bus operators, Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired if the Administration would provide subsidy to

operators to use greener and barrier-free models. Sharing similar views, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok and Mr LAU Kwok-fan added that the Administration should review the provision of sufficient infrastructure such as public charging facilities to facilitate the promotion of greener and wheelchair-accessible transport.

34. DS/T(2) responded that a cross-departmental working group comprising TD and the Environmental Protection Department had been formed to formulate measures to promote the wider use of greener vehicles by public transport operators. The Administration would explore incentives to support this policy initiative, including the provision of subsidy, if considered necessary.

#### *Other issues*

35. Mr WU Chi-wai took the opportunity to express his views that the Administration should consider relaxing the operational restrictions of red minibuses (“RMBs”), such as relaxing restricted zones and opening up more pick-up/drop-off areas to help the trade overcome the operating difficulties. Mr Andrew WAN said that the transport sector was hard-hit by the novel coronavirus pandemic and that many light bus operators were facing immense financial pressure in paying off bank loans. He called on the Administration to formulate immediate measures to help the trade.

36. DS/T(2) replied that TD had maintained close communications with the RMB operators and had taken various measures to help the trade, such as encouraging RMBs to convert to GMBs. Measures to facilitate their operations including relaxation of restricted zones and prohibited zones for RMBs had been done as far as practicable, but proper balance would need to be struck in view of road safety and traffic management issues. As regards the operating difficulties faced by the transport trades, DS/T(2) said that the Administration was actively formulating relief measures to help the trades to get through the difficult times.

37. In response to Mr LUK Chung-hung’s request to follow-up with public light bus operators on the provision of meal breaks to frontline drivers, DS/T(2) said that TD would continue to discuss with operators on the matter.

#### Conclusion

38. The Chairman concluded that members raised no objection to the legislative proposals. As suggested by members during the discussion, he requested the Administration to expedite the modification works to light bus

termini, relevant road sections and public transport interchanges to cater for the longer vehicle length, and to formulate concrete measures including the provision of subsidy to promote wider use of green and wheelchair-accessible vehicle models by the trade.

## **V. Enhancement of Safety of Franchised Buses and Creation of Directorate Posts in the Transport Department**

LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(06) - Administration's paper on enhancement of safety of franchised buses and creation of directorate posts in the Transport Department

LC Paper No. CB(4)378/19-20(07) - Paper on safety of franchised bus operations prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief)

*(At 12:12 pm, the Chairman proposed to further extend the meeting for 15 minutes to 1:00 pm to allow sufficient time for discussion. Members raised no objection.)*

### Briefing by the Administration

39. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the follow-up actions taken by the Administration in relation to the recommendations put forth in the Report submitted by the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service to the Chief Executive ("the Report"). He said that most of the recommendations put forth in the Report had been implemented or were being implemented, with some of them becoming on-going measures. Details of the implementation progress were given in Annex A to the Administration's paper.

40. In addition, STH sought members' views on the proposal to establish a dedicated franchised bus safety team with the creation of three directorate posts in TD for strengthening the support in enhancing franchised bus safety.

## Discussion

### *Proposed creation of a franchised bus safety team in TD*

41. Mr LAM Cheuk-ting opined that ensuring franchised bus safety and reliability should have been an on-going initiative of the TD. In his view, the Administration was to draw up relevant safety policies and measures for the franchised bus operators to execute, and that TD should only assume a monitoring role and follow up on irregularities. Besides, TD had already completed implementing 43 out of 45 recommendations put forth in the Report relating to franchised bus safety. He therefore did not see any genuine need for the creation of a franchised bus safety team consisting of three permanent directorate posts and nine permanent non-directorate posts. He said that the Democratic Party would not support the staffing proposal.

42. STH explained that one of the recommendations put forth in the Report was the appointment of a Safety Director and a small franchised bus safety team. The dedicated team would be entrusted with the overall responsibility for all aspects of franchised bus safety. STH added that the tasks involved were complicated and wide range, including the strengthening of regulations and initiatives on the training of bus captains, proper standardization and accreditation of relevant training courses and the application of new bus technology. The proposed team would ensure that all these tasks would be implemented in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

43. Mr LAU Kwok-fan expressed doubt on the number of posts proposed to be created in executing bus safety measures as there were already staff in TD overseeing safety of franchised buses. Sharing similar views, Mr POON Siu-ping also commented that the new team might be a duplication of existing manpower resources in TD. He opined that most of the franchised bus accidents could be prevented if the working hours of bus captains could be shortened. The Administration could enhance bus safety by including in the franchise relevant terms, such as restricting the working hours of bus captains, for operators to follow. Both members enquired about the differences that would be brought about by the new team.

44. Commissioner for Transport ("C for T") replied that the setting up of a franchised bus safety team in TD was modelled on the practice of overseas experience. Apart from taking forward on-going measures relating to franchised bus safety, the team would need to take up new initiatives such as studying and overseeing the implementation of measures in relation to bus captain fatigue management and the adoption of suitable and new technology

of safety devices on buses.

45. On the adoption of latest technology as quoted by C for T above, Mr LAU opined that it would be far more effective and efficient to encourage industry-led innovation rather than for the Administration to assume the spearheading role. C for T explained that under the leadership of the proposed Safety Director, TD would work hand-in-hand with franchised bus operators, bus manufacturers and other stakeholders to develop new initiatives on bus safety technologies and related devices.

46. Mr Tony TSE expressed that the public had reasonable expectations that TD would seriously follow-up with franchised bus operators after each franchised bus accident to further promote and enhance bus safety. The present staffing proposal would give the impression that the Administration only started to pay heed to the importance of bus safety upon the establishment of the new team. Furthermore, Mr TSE opined that bus safety hinged on a host of factors, including design of buses, behaviour of bus captains and other road users and the design and maintenance of roads and highways. He requested the Administration to provide further justifications for the public to understand the necessity of setting up the new safety team and how the team would holistically review and monitor all relevant factors in preventing accidents and promoting bus safety.

47. STH took note of Mr TSE's suggestion of providing more justifications for setting up the new franchised bus safety team. He reiterated that the new team was crucial in taking forward the development of new initiatives to reinforce TD's regulatory role over franchised bus safety as well as uplifting safety standards.

48. Noting that the proposed Safety Director would be involved in strengthening the Government's regulation on the safety of franchised bus operations in Hong Kong, Mr Jeremy TAM asked whether the post would be given statutory power to access the operational data of franchised bus operators, including but not limited to the data contained in the blackbox of franchised buses for effective discharge of his duties.

49. STH replied that TD had already had access to operational data, including blackbox data, of franchised bus operators when necessary; and the proposed Safety Director would be able to access information relating to bus safety when discharging his duties.

*Franchised bus safety and other issues*



50. Mr Michael TIEN expressed that public transport in Hong Kong consisted of many different transport modes and that the Administration should holistically review the safety of all transport modes in Hong Kong. On franchised bus safety, he recommended that all franchised bus should be retrofitted with seat belts as well as seat belt sensors to alert bus captains those passengers who did not wear seat belts properly by means of buzzing sound or lights. Secondly, to avoid crashing incidents, he called on the Administration to consider mandating other drivers and road users to give way to franchised buses when bus captains drove the buses away from bus stations by way of legislation.

51. STH took note of Mr TIEN's suggestion. On the issue of giving way to franchised buses, he said that TD had launched a bus-friendly measure on trial in Central, Kowloon City, Kwai Fong and Shatin since September 2019 where signages were placed at the back of some franchised buses deployed at the trial locations to alert succeeding drivers and road users to give way. The Administration would review the effectiveness of the measure in due course. The Chairman opined that the Administration should consider more stringent measure such as legislation for more effective enforcement of the bus-friendly measure.

52. In reply to Mr Jeremy TAM's enquiry on the timetable in completing the review on driver fatigue as recommended in the Report, C for T said that the Sub-committee on Training, Fatigue and Work Hour Management of Bus Captain was set up under the Committee on Enhancement of Franchised Bus Safety to continue overseeing the Government's follow-up actions in relation to fatigue management of franchised bus drivers. The Administration was planning to appoint independent local experts to conduct a comprehensive research on identification and management of fatigue driving and the study would commence by end 2020.

53. Pointing out that a number of complaints had been received on the frequency of franchised bus service recently, Mr POON Siu-ping sought information on the provision of bus services during the novel coronavirus pandemic. STH replied that as a result of the pandemic, there had been a significant drop in bus patronage recently. In view of the drop, some franchised bus operators submitted applications to TD for adjusting service frequency of their routes. In considering these applications, TD would balance factors such as the need for social distancing to prevent the spread of the coronavirus within bus compartments, passenger demand for bus service as well as the efficient use of bus resources. TD would seriously follow up complaint cases on bus service frequency with franchised bus operators.

Conclusion

54. The Chairman advised the Administration to take note of members' views on the establishment of a franchised bus safety team in TD. The Administration was requested to provide more justifications on the staffing proposal when submitting it to the Establishment Subcommittee for deliberation.

**VI Any other business**

55. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:51 pm.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
8 July 2020