

立法會
Legislative Council

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seen by the Administration)

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

Minutes of the 31st meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Friday, 2 July 2021, from 2:45 pm to 4:06 pm

Members present:

Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, SBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH

Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kiwok, GBS, MH, JP
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH, JP
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Members absent:

Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Public officers attending:

Ms Alice LAU Yim, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Mr Raistlin LAU Chun, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Miss Jennie CHAN Cheuk-yin	Principal Executive Officer (G), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr Patrick NIP Tak-kuen, JP	Secretary for the Civil Service
Mrs Ingrid YEUNG HO Poi-yan, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service
Miss Ann CHAN Wai-yan	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2
Ms Heidi WONG Lai-ngor	Assistant Director of Accounting Services
Ms Amy WONG Pui-man	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 2

Miss Jerry JI Sang	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 1
Miss Rosanna LAW Shuk-pui, JP	Commissioner for Transport
Ms Macella LEE Sui-chun, JP	Deputy Commissioner for Transport (Transport Services and Management)
Mr Felix YIM Kai-lung	Principal Transport Officer (Bus and Railway 3), Transport Department
Mr William SHUM Ngai-on	Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (Vehicle Safety and Standards), Transport Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Anita SIT	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Miss Queenie LAM	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)2
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Miss Yannes HO	Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

The Chairman reminded members of the requirements under Rule 83A and Rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure.

**Item 1 — FCR(2021-22)40
RECOMMENDATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 9 JUNE 2021**

**EC(2021-22)3
HEAD 53 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: HOME AFFAIRS
BUREAU
Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

2. The Chairman advised that this item sought the approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") for the recommendation of the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC") made at its meeting on 9 June 2021 regarding EC(2021-22)3, i.e. retention of one supernumerary post of Government Architect (D2) in the Home Affairs Bureau to continue to head the Kai Tak Sports Park Section to oversee the implementation of the Kai Tak Sports

Park. No member had requested that the recommendation be voted on separately at the FC meeting.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)40

3. At 2:46 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)40 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

Item 2 — FCR(2021-22)39

HEAD 46 — GENERAL EXPENSES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE
Subhead 013 Personal allowances

4. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for: (a) the expansion of the ambit of Head 46 General Expenses of the Civil Service Subhead 013 Personal allowances (i.e. expanding the scope of "Local Education Allowance" ("LEA") and renaming it as "Mainland and Local Education Allowance" ("the proposed MLEA")) to cover the provision of education allowances for eligible civil servants in respect of their children's primary and secondary education in the Mainland; and (b) a supplementary provision of \$15 million under Subhead 013 in 2021-2022 for implementing the above proposal. The Civil Service Bureau had consulted the Panel on Public Service on the relevant proposal on 19 April 2021.

Eligibility criteria, scope and ceiling rates of the proposed MLEA

5. Mr Tony TSE declared that he was a member of the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service. Mr TSE, Mr YIU Si-wing, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Mr Martin LIAO noted that only civil servants who had joined the civil service in response to an offer dated before 1 June 2000 were eligible for claiming the proposed MLEA. They urged the Administration to consider extending the eligibility criteria for the proposed MLEA to cover civil servants who had been offered appointment on or after 1 June 2000, or providing them with a Mainland Education Allowance.

6. Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") advised that for the purpose of introducing the proposed MLEA expeditiously, its eligibility criteria would follow the existing arrangement for LEA, i.e. it would only be applicable to civil servants who had joined the civil service in response to an offer dated before 1 June 2000. Extending the eligibility criteria for the proposed MLEA to cover civil servants who had been offered appointment

on or after 1 June 2000, or providing them with a Mainland Education Allowance would involve a change in the overall welfare of civil servants, constituting a major policy change which would need to be considered in a holistic manner. The Government hoped to implement the proposed MLEA first and then review it subsequently.

7. The Deputy Chairman declared that he was a member of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service. Expressing support for the introduction of the proposed MLEA, the Deputy Chairman and Mr Christopher CHEUNG enquired whether the Administration had information on the number and age of civil servants' children who were attending primary and secondary schools in the Mainland, and whether a further increase in the number of enrollees was expected. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would consider raising the rates of the proposed MLEA (currently pitched at 75% of the school fee and subject to specified ceiling rates) if the number of beneficiaries of the allowance was limited. Mr YIU Si-wing asked whether the cap on the number of children (up to four children) for whom the proposed MLEA might be claimed could be removed with a view to encouraging childbearing among civil servants.

8. SCS advised that the Government had not maintained statistics on the number of civil servants' children who were currently attending primary and secondary schools in the Mainland. However, based on preliminary estimation, there would be about 200 applications for the proposed MLEA every year. It was understood that most of the schools attended by the civil servants' children concerned were situated in the Guangdong Province. According to the information provided by the Education Bureau ("EDB"), about 3 600 Hong Kong students (including the children of civil servants) were attending classes for Hong Kong students in the Mainland in the 2020-2021 school year. SCS advised that the ceiling rates of the proposed MLEA should be sufficient to meet the tuition fees charged by Mainland schools. He reiterated that MLEA would adopt the existing arrangement for LEA, including the requirement of pitching the rates at up to 75% of the school fee, subject to specified ceiling rates. In 2006, FC approved the freezing of the ceiling rates for LEA with no further adjustment. Any upward adjustment of the ceiling rates for the proposed MLEA would affect LEA as well. As for the maximum number of children for whom the proposed MLEA might be claimed, the Government would review if there was a need for relaxation in light of applications.

9. Noting the launch of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("MUSSS") by EDB since 2014, Mr Christopher CHEUNG considered that the subsidy rate of MUSSS was limited and was insufficient to meet the

expenses of pursuing university education in the Mainland. In this regard, he enquired whether the Administration would consider expanding the scope of the proposed MLEA so as to subsidize the children of civil servants to pursue university education in the Mainland.

10. SCS advised that the scope of the proposed MLEA was the same as that of the existing LEA, i.e. not covering tertiary institutions. MUSSS comprised of two components, namely, "means-tested subsidy" and "non-means-tested subsidy", and their rates were different. He believed that EDB would review the subsidy rates if necessary.

Mainland schools recognized for the purpose of claiming the proposed MLEA

11. Mr YIU Si-wing and Mr Tony TSE noted that as a requirement for claiming the proposed MLEA, the Mainland schools attended by applicants' children had to be recognized by the Ministry of Education or relevant authorities. Mr YIU enquired whether the school list concerned had been compiled by the Mainland authorities or the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. Mr TSE enquired whether international schools and private schools had been included in the list, as well as how much tuition fees Hong Kong students (including students coming to Hong Kong on Permits for Proceeding to Hong Kong and Macao (i.e. "One-way Permits")) had to pay for studying in Mainland schools.

12. SCS advised that the proposed MLEA would be an appropriate response to the needs of many civil servants who wished to send their children to primary and secondary schools in the Mainland. According to the Government's understanding, most of the schools attended by the children of civil servants were situated in the Guangdong Province. The Guangdong Provincial Government had also kept a list of schools recognized by the Ministry of Education or relevant authorities. It was believed that sufficient information was available for reference by applicants in need. Even if the schools attended were outside the Guangdong Province, the Government would provide assistance if necessary.

13. SCS and Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service ("PSCS") further said that Hong Kong students (including students who had come to Hong Kong on One-way Permits) did not have Mainland household registration, and they therefore could only enroll in private schools in the Mainland. In addition to schools which were recognized by the Ministry of Education and offered the Mainland or Hong Kong curricula, eligible schools also included international schools (i.e. known as "schools for children of foreign personnel" in the Mainland). Tuition fees for private schools in the

Mainland varied significantly, ranging from several thousand Renminbi ("RMB") to RMB 80,000 or 90,000 per year. In Shenzhen, tuition fees for non-boarders in classes for Hong Kong students ranged from RMB 11,600 to 60,000 per year. The proposed MLEA was expected to cover most of the tuition fees.

Articulation pathways for pursuing further studies locally

14. Mr Martin LIAO expressed support for the introduction of the proposed MLEA. He was concerned that if Hong Kong students chose the Mainland curriculum, they might encounter curriculum articulation problems when they returned to Hong Kong for further studies. He enquired whether the Administration had compiled statistics on the places of study of civil servants' children in the Mainland and their curriculum choices. Mr LIAO also enquired whether the maximum number of non-local students admissible to University Grants Committee-funded universities (i.e. 20% of the approved student number) included Hong Kong students who had returned to Hong Kong to pursue university education after completing secondary education in the Mainland.

15. SCS advised that the Government did not maintain information on the curriculum choices of Hong Kong students in the Mainland. Subject to funding approval by FC, eligible civil servants might claim MLEA in respect of their children who were attending primary and secondary schools in the Mainland in the 2020-2021 school year. By then, the Government would have a more accurate grasp of the number of applicants and other relevant information, including the places of study of civil servants' children and the type of curricula enrolled, etc. He pointed out that whether Hong Kong students would choose to study the Hong Kong, Mainland or international curricula in the Mainland would depend on their articulation choices. For instance, some students might wish to pursue university education in the Mainland after completing primary and secondary education there, and they therefore would choose to study the Mainland curriculum. SCS and PSCS advised that all students not sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination but holding other public examination results (including Hong Kong students) were required to apply for admission to universities in Hong Kong through the non-Joint University Programmes Admissions System route.

Supporting Hong Kong people to study in the Mainland

16. Mr Christopher CHEUNG considered that many years had passed since the reunification, and it was too late for the Administration to introduce the proposed MLEA. Mr CHEUNG, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and

Mr Martin LIAO pointed out that given the need for Hong Kong to integrate into the overall national development (including the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("Greater Bay Area")), the demand of civil servants' children for pursuing studies in the Mainland might be increasing. The Administration should provide more support measures on top of the proposed MLEA. Mr Tony TSE enquired whether the existing policy would be reviewed to provide further support to Hong Kong people' children who wished to study in the Mainland.

17. Mr LUK Chung-hung supported the introduction of the proposed MLEA. Expressing concerns about the shortfall of places for classes for Hong Kong students in the Mainland, he enquired whether the various relevant government bureaux/departments (e.g. the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and EDB) would discuss with the relevant Mainland departments with a view to increasing such places.

18. In response, SCS pointed out that education development was an important area in the development of the Greater Bay Area. EDB had been maintaining close communication with school sponsoring bodies in Hong Kong to assist them in understanding the situation in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area and exploring opportunities for establishing schools there. For instance, Shenzhen Hong Kong Pui Kiu College Longhua Xinyi School was recently established in Shenzhen and would officially commence classes in September 2021. The School would offer the Hong Kong curriculum and admit students from Hong Kong and Macao. Other international schools also strived to seize the development opportunities in the Greater Bay Area. It was expected that there would be more choices of schools offering the Hong Kong curriculum and international schools in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, facilitating Hong Kong young people's pursuit of studies and development in the Mainland. SCS further advised that the proposed MLEA would set an example to demonstrate the Government's support for and encouragement to Hong Kong people to study in the Mainland. The Administration would also introduce other schemes and measures to promote exchanges between the two places and assist young people to seek employment in the Mainland, with a view to promoting Hong Kong's integration into the overall national development on various fronts.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)39

19. At 3:19 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)39 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

**Item 3 — FCR(2021-22)41
RECOMMENDATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 9 JUNE 2021**

**EC(2021-22)6
HEAD 186 — TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

20. The Chairman advised that this item sought the approval of FC for the recommendation of ESC made at its meeting on 9 June 2021 regarding EC(2021-22)6, i.e. creating the following posts in the Transport Department ("TD"): one supernumerary post of Assistant Commissioner for Transport ("AC for T") (D2) or D2-equivalent non-civil service position; one supernumerary post of Principal Transport Officer ("PTO") (D1); and one supernumerary post of Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (D1) to lead the Franchised Bus ("FB") Safety Team to strengthen the oversight and support in enhancing the safety of FBs. The time spent by ESC on the deliberation of the above proposal was about 59 minutes. The Administration had provided an information paper.

Justifications for creating the proposed posts

21. Mr Tony TSE pointed out that TD had about 1 900 staff members at present and, among them, 32 were directorate officers, which meant that in every 100 staff members in TD, 1.7 of them were directorate officers. Comparing to not more than 0.9 directorate officer in every 100 civil servants under the entire Civil Service establishment, the proportion of directorate officers in TD seemed to be on the high side. In this regard, Mr TSE requested the Administration to explain the justifications for creating the three proposed posts as well as the oversight work undertaken by the existing directorate officers in TD in enhancing the safety of FBs. He also enquired that, upon the creation of the proposed posts and the establishment of the Railways Department in future, how TD would redeploy its directorate officers and reshuffle the work of the teams led by them. Citing the inconsistent requirements on wearing seat belts imposed by TD on passengers of different categories of vehicles as an example, Mr TSE queried if the directorate officers in TD had all along been lacking co-ordination among themselves in the formulation of traffic safety policies.

22. Commissioner for Transport ("C for T") responded that in the past, TD enhanced the safety of FBs with its available resources. Of the 45 recommendations on enhancing the safety of FBs put forth in the Report of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service

released towards the end of 2018, TD had completed or commenced the implementation of 43 recommendations. To take forward the remaining two recommendations stated in the Review Report and follow up on other work related to those recommendations, TD considered it necessary to set up the proposed FB Safety Team and appoint a Safety Director to steer the research projects relating to the enhancement of FB safety.

23. C for T explained that there were currently over 878 000 registered vehicles in Hong Kong. The number of registered vehicles had grown by around 40% in the past decade, but the manpower of TD had only slightly increased during the same period. Although TD planned to seek approval from FC in the 2018-2019 legislative session for the creation of a permanent Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) post to take forward various new initiatives for enhancing public transport services (including enhancing the operating safety of FBs) as soon as possible, the proposal was not dealt with by FC due to the social incidents in 2019. At present, an Assistant Commissioner headed the Bus and Railway Branch ("BRB") of TD, while three PTOs led the three teams of Bus and Railway 1 ("BR1"), Bus and Railway 2 ("BR2") and Bus and Railway 3 ("BR3") respectively, which were heavily loaded with work. In this connection, C for T expounded that:

- (a) The BR1 team was responsible for overseeing the planning, development and regulation of three bus franchises, namely the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited, Citybus Limited ("Citybus") (Franchise for Hong Kong Island and Cross-harbour Bus Network) and New World First Bus Services Limited, which included conducting bus network reviews and pursuing bus route rationalization, so as to promote the efficiency of the bus service network and improve service quality; exploring the provision of more diversified bus services; monitoring the financial performance of the bus companies; handling bus fare increase applications; and monitoring the regulation and safety of bus services, etc. In the coming years, PTO/BR1 had to be engaged in overseeing the planning of new bus service networks and associated bus facilities to meet the transport needs in the New Development Areas including Kai Tak, Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South;
- (b) The BR2 team was responsible for monitoring the existing domestic railway services and related operations; formulating performance requirements and monitoring the service readiness for commissioning the new railways; monitoring the planning and finance of tram services; handling tram fare increase

applications; managing the non-franchised bus trade; and implementing the measures for improving the environment of public transport interchanges ("PTIs") which included planning of ancillary facilities for passengers and franchised bus operators at the PTIs, as well as monitoring the air quality of the covered PTIs managed by the Government. PTO/BR2 also had to be heavily engaged in the preparatory works for the service readiness for the full commissioning of extension of MTR East Rail Line to Admiralty, including monitoring on-site tests which were often conducted during the small hours and discussing with the MTR Corporation Limited about improvement measures; and

- (c) The BR3 team was responsible for monitoring the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link; providing advice on the planning of various new railways (including the new railway network recommended in the Railway Development Strategy 2014); studying and implementing public transport re-organization plans relating to the commissioning of the new railways. PTO/BR3 also assisted AC/BRB in overseeing the planning, development and regulation of three bus franchises, namely Citybus (Franchise for Airport and North Lantau Bus Network), Long Win Bus Company Limited and New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited; handling bus fare increase applications; and monitoring the regulation and safety of bus services, etc. In the coming years, PTO/BR3 had to be engaged in reviewing and re-organizing the public transport networks in association with the full commissioning of MTR Tuen Ma Line and extension of East Rail Line to Admiralty.

Moreover, in the coming five years, TD had to undertake a number of important tasks, including handling negotiations on three bus franchise renewal which would expire in 2023. Afterwards, TD would also have to be engaged in discussions on the new franchises for another three bus franchises which would expire next. To strengthen the oversight and support in enhancing the safety of FB, TD proposed to create the three proposed supernumerary posts, each lasting for five years.

24. Regarding the proportion of directorate officers in TD, C for T advised that as every government department had its own specific operational needs, it would not be appropriate to compare the numbers of directorate officers in different departments. She further explained that directorate officers in TD had to take part in the formulation of transport policies and inter-bureau/departmental development projects; support the

design, construction and management of various traffic and transport ancillary facilities; and personally explain in detail the relevant policies to the Legislative Council and the public. Upon the creation of the proposed posts, TD would be able to adopt a more proactive approach than that of the past to enhance the safety of FBs, including more active participation in related international bus benchmarking groups so as to facilitate exchanges with similar regulatory authorities in other places, and to ensure that TD could keep abreast of international best practices and standards in relation to the regulation of public bus services; strengthening communication between FB captains and operators so as to safeguard the work environment of the captains and in turn improve road safety; enhancing the capability to monitor the safety performance of the operators; and rationalizing and consolidating the safety measures for related modes of public transport, etc. Officers discharging these duties must possess extensive experience in FB operations as well as a forward-looking vision, and the need to exert adequate pressure on FB operators in order to urge them to conform with the policy initiatives of the Government was also one of the reasons that the proposed posts had to be held by directorate officers. The concrete arrangements for the manpower deployment of the future Railways Department, however, were not covered by the present financial proposal.

25. At the request of Mr Tony TSE, the Administration undertook to provide after the meeting supplementary information on how the responsibilities of the existing AC and PTO in TD would be re-distributed upon the creation of the proposed supernumerary posts so as to enhance the safety of other vehicles and the general traffic.

[Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. FC197/20-21(01) on 21 July 2021.]

26. Mr CHAN Han-pan and Mr Frankie YICK supported the creation of the proposed posts. Mr YICK concurred that to ensure the safety of FBs, TD should develop a proactive strategy as well as conduct researches on and introduce suitable technologies. He noted that TD had yet to study and take forward a number of transport policies and measures, including formulating a legal framework for autonomous vehicles; studying congestion charging, free-flow tolling system for tunnels and the future rationalization of traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings, etc. He urged TD to increase its manpower to speed up the delivery of various urgent tasks. Mr CHAN was concerned that whether additional manpower in TD would result in overlapping administrative measures on enhancing the safety of FBs instead of addressing the real problems. He also enquired how the

Administration would assess the work performance of the holders of the proposed posts.

27. C for T responded that TD would identify the most suitable candidate from Hong Kong or overseas for the proposed Safety Director post through an open recruitment exercise. The officer concerned would be supervised by C for T. During the appointment period, the Safety Director would transfer his/her knowledge to the officers in TD and introduce new ideas, so as to enhance bus safety in a more effective manner. C for T would review the work performance of the Safety Director and his/her supporting staff based on the progress and effectiveness of the various tasks to be discharged by the FB Safety Team.

Responsibilities of the proposed posts

28. Ir Dr LO Wai-kyok supported this financial proposal. He enquired whether the responsibilities of the proposed posts would also cover the enhancement of the safety of other vehicles and road safety.

29. C for T replied that the proposed posts were mainly responsible for enhancing the safety of FBs. However, the officers concerned would examine from time to time whether facilities and policy initiatives which facilitated the enhancement of the safety of FBs were also applicable to other commercial vehicles, or they would assist in drawing up codes of practice for operators providing the relevant transport services and for motorists, etc. A separate dedicated team set up under TD was tasked to formulate and review road safety policies and standards, conduct road safety research, implement road safety initiatives and road safety audit. Moreover, a dedicated team of engineers would investigate traffic and transport incidents and provide support.

In-vehicle devices and bus technologies for FBs

30. Mr Michael TIEN said that the public attached great importance to the safety of buses and light buses. They also had high expectations of the Administration in enhancing passenger safety. Mr TIEN pointed out that the Administration had already legislated to require passenger seats of light buses to be installed with seat belts and passengers to wear the seat belts provided. He was of the view that the authorities should at least impose the same statutory requirements on the upper deck seats of FBs and enquired about the relevant legislative timetable. He indicated that he would support this financial proposal if the said legislative exercise was one of the responsibilities of the proposed posts. Mr TIEN added that despite the statutory requirement that passengers of light buses must wear seat belts,

enforcement actions were inadequate. He suggested that the Administration might consider installing suitable alert devices (including the sounding of alerting chimes) on FBs and light buses so as to raise the awareness of passengers on wearing seat belts.

31. In response, C for T advised that FB operators had been progressively installing seat belts on the upper deck seats of the buses operated by them. TD would also commence a study on requiring passengers on the upper deck of buses to wear seat belts. As quite a number of FBs would be involved and the installation of devices such as sensors on vehicles would take time, TD considered that it was necessary to communicate properly with FB operators in advance on the relevant legislative exercise and policy initiatives. C for T agreed with the importance of raising the awareness of passengers of buses and light buses on wearing seat belts. She advised that the Government was studying ways or devices to effectively identify and alert passengers who had not put on seat belts immediately on light buses. TD would implement the relevant measures as soon as possible and extend the requirement of wearing seat belts to the upper deck of FBs and other commercial vehicles.

32. Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired about the progress of installing electronic stability control and speed limiting retarder on FBs, and whether the Administration would advocate the introduction of more devices to enhance safe driving.

33. C for T advised that all new buses procured from July 2018 onwards would be equipped with electronic stability control and speed limiting retarder. TD and various FB operators had also arranged for the retrofitting of the two devices on around 4 000 existing double-deck buses where technically feasible. The retrofitting work had begun progressively since the third quarter of 2020 and was expected to be completed in 2023. When considering the introduction of other devices, TD would duly assess whether the devices proposed to be introduced were conducive to the enhancement of safe driving and whether the relevant arrangements were reasonable. TD would exchange views in this regard with various FB operators and the representatives of bus captains on a regular basis.

Communication with FB captains

34. Mr LUK Chung-hung said that staff unions of the FB trade ("the unions") supported this staffing proposal and hoped that, upon the establishment of FB Safety Team, its members could hold quarterly exchanges with representatives of the unions on issues related to safe driving. In light of the increasing number of incidents in which the mood of bus

captains while driving was affected by the acts of passengers, he enquired whether FB Safety Team would conduct any study in this field; if so, of the details.

35. C for T replied that TD planned to have regular exchanges on how to enhance FB safety with the employee representatives of the FB trade upon the establishment of FB Safety Team to listen to the views and observations of different parties, including bus captains about their driving duties. Concerning the disturbing acts done by some passengers on bus captains when the latter were driving, pursuant to the existing legislation, any passenger who wilfully obstructed, impeded or distracted the captain of the bus committed an offence and would be liable to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$3,000 and six months' imprisonment. At present, FB companies were progressively installing protective panels which separated the driving cabs of captains from passengers, so as to minimize the possibility of passengers affecting the mood of bus captains while driving. Regarding the installation of other additional devices (including devices with monitoring or recording functions) on FBs, concerns about privacy might have to be addressed. TD would have appropriate communications with the unions.

Factors related to FB safety

36. Mr CHAN Han-pan considered that the designs of carriageways also bore great significance to bus safety. He asked the Administration to give an account on the upgrading of road facilities.

37. C for T advised that the team of engineers in the Road Safety and Standards Division under TD was responsible for examining and upgrading road designs and facilities in various districts over the territory, so as to provide a safe driving environment. TD would also gauge the views and suggestions of the transport sector and other road users. Road improvement works would be carried out where necessary. For instance, TD was actively studying options for improving the arrow lights at crossroads (also known as the "Traffic Light with Split Phase"), with a view to enhancing the overall road safety.

Data of traffic accidents

38. Mr Tony TSE indicated that in his written question raised at the Council meeting on 23 June 2021, he sought several sets of data on the traffic accidents caused by the cranes of crane lorries not having been folded properly. Regarding the Administration's reply that it possessed neither the records of traffic incidents with no casualties involved nor the number of crane lorries on which a warning system had been installed to alert drivers if

the cranes were out of their stowed position when the vehicles were in motion, Mr TSE was of the view that there were inadequacies on the part of the authorities in the collection of data for enhancing road safety.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)41

39. At 4:06 pm , the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)41 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

40. The meeting ended at 4:06 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
19 November 2021