

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)607/20-21

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by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting

**held on Tuesday, 5 January 2021, at 5:00 pm
in Conference Room 3 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
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, 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 LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Members absent : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP

**Public officers
attending : Agenda item IV**

Miss Winnie TSE Wing-yee
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport) 3
Transport and Housing Bureau

Ms Shirley KWAN Yu-pik
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport) 2
Transport and Housing Bureau

Mr Eddie LEUNG Siu-kong
Assistant Commissioner / Task Force
Transport Department

Mr Eric WAN Pak-yan
Principal Transport Officer /
New Territories 2
Transport Department

Mr Michael HONG Wing-kit
Chief Civil Engineer
/Public Works Programme
Housing Department

Mr Joe LEUNG Bing-man
Chief Civil Engineer/2 (Acting)
Housing Department

Mr Max WONG Chi-chung
Chief Architect/3
Housing Department

Mr Gardas LI Kar-fai
Chief Architect/2
Housing Department

Agenda item V

Miss Winnie TSE Wing-yee
Deputy Secretary for
Transport and Housing (Transport) 3
Transport and Housing Bureau

Ms Shirley KWAN Yu-pik
Principal Assistant Secretary for
Transport and Housing (Transport) 2
Transport and Housing Bureau

Ms Candy KWOK Wai-ying
Assistant Commissioner /
Administration and Licensing
Transport Department

Mr Michael LAW Hing-sun
Assistant Commissioner /
Technical Services
Transport Department

Mr Patrick WONG Chi-kwong
Assistant Commissioner /
Management and Paratransit
Transport Department

Ms Amy LEE Mei-fung
Principal Transport Officer /
Management
Transport Department

Mr George FONG Shung-kit
Senior Engineer / Smart Mobility 3
Transport Department

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Jacqueline LAW
Council Secretary (4)2

Miss Mandy LAM
Legislative Assistant (4)2

Mr Chris CHAN
Clerical Assistant (4)2

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

- LC Paper No. CB(4)227/20-21(01) - Letter from Hon CHAN Hak-kan proposing an item for discussion by the Panel
- LC Paper No. CB(4)247/20-21(01) - Letter from Hon CHAN Hak-kan proposing items for discussion by the Panel
- LC Paper No. CB(4)271/20-21(01) - Administration's response to the joint letter relating to the issue of the Certificate of Particulars of Motor Vehicles

Members noted the above papers issued since the meeting held on 20 November 2020.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

- LC Paper No. CB(4)320/20-21(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(4)320/20-21(02) - List of follow-up actions

2. The Chairman referred members to the letters dated 23 and 30 November 2020 respectively from Mr CHAN Hak-kan addressing to the Panel Chairman, in which Mr CHAN had proposed to discuss the progress of the implementation of the Northern Link under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 and the construction of a Sha Tin Bypass and a MTR station in Pak Shek Kok at future meetings. The Chairman informed members that the proposed way forward of the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) project had been scheduled for

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discussion by the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") on 15 January 2021. The Chairman sought members' views on whether the other two items should be included in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

3. Mr CHAN Hak-kan pointed out that the construction of a Sha Tin Bypass would be instrumental in improving the traffic conditions in the New Territories East. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok shared Mr CHAN's view and suggested addressing the matter from a wider perspective and discussing measures to improve the overall road network in the New Territories East. The Chairman and Mr CHAN concurred with Ir Dr LO's suggestion. The Chairman then instructed the Clerk to include Mr CHAN's and Ir Dr LO's views in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

4. The Chairman said that he and the Deputy Chairman had met with the Secretary for Transport and Housing in early December 2020 to discuss the work plan of the Panel for the 2020-2021 session. The latest lists of outstanding items for discussion and follow-up actions were circulated to members for reference vide LC Paper Nos. CB(4)320/20-21(01) to (02).

5. Members noted that the following items would be discussed at the next regular meeting to be held on 15 January 2021:

- (a) 6856TH — Flyover from Kwai Tsing Interchange Upramp to Kwai Chung Road; and
- (b) 8003QR – Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge – funding support for Main Bridge.

III. Matters arising from the last meeting on 20 November 2020

6. The Chairman recalled that members were consulted vide LC Paper No. CB(4)315/20-21 issued on 23 December 2020 as to whether they agreed to the proposal of inviting the Panel on Financial Affairs ("the FA Panel") to form a joint subcommittee with the Panel on Transport to study and follow up on the problems encountered by the transport sector in procuring insurance, and to make recommendations to tackle such problems where appropriate ("the proposal"). The Chairman drew members' attention that a Joint Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Insurance Coverage for the Transport Sector was formed under the Panel on Transport and the FA Panel in 2011 to study similar issues relating to the difficulties encountered by the transport sector in obtaining insurance coverage.

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7. The Chairman reported that by the deadline of reply, a total of 14 members returned the reply slips, among them 13 members indicated agreement to the proposal and one member indicated that the proposal should be further discussed at a Panel meeting. The Chairman then invited members to express their views on the proposal. Since no member indicated intent to speak upon the Chairman's invitation, and in view that majority of members who returned the reply slips had indicated agreement to the proposal, the Chairman concluded that the proposal was endorsed by the Panel. He instructed the Clerk to send an invitation letter to the FA Panel about the proposal. Subject to the agreement of the FA Panel, the Clerk would report the decision of the two Panels to form a joint subcommittee to the House Committee and seek its support in this regard.

(Post-meeting note: The invitation letter was sent to the FA Panel on 7 January 2021. Members of the FA Panel were consulted on the proposal by way of circulation on 8 January 2021 and the FA Panel expressed support to it. The House Committee endorsed at its meeting on 29 January 2021 the proposal of setting up a joint subcommittee under the two Panels to study issues relating to insurance coverage for the transport sector.)

IV. 3023TP - Public vehicle park at Areas 4 and 30 (Site 2), Sheung Shui, 3024TP - Public vehicle park at Area 99, Tung Chung and B085TI - Public Transport Interchange at Tung Chung Area 99

LC Paper No. CB(4)320/20-21(03) - Administration's paper on 3023TP - Public vehicle park at Areas 4 and 30 (Site 2), Sheung Shui, 3024TP - Public vehicle park at Area 99, Tung Chung and B085TI - Public Transport Interchange at Tung Chung Area 99

Briefing by the Administration

8. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)³ ("DSTH(T)3") briefed members on the Administration's funding application for upgrading three projects to Category A, i.e. 3023TP - Public vehicle park at Areas 4 and 30 (Site 2), Sheung Shui, 3024TP - Public vehicle park at Area 99, Tung Chung and B085TI - Public Transport

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Interchange at Tung Chung Area 99 (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the three projects"). Members were briefed on the justifications and project scope of the three projects, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper. DSTH(T)3 added that the Administration planned to commence the construction works of the three projects upon obtaining funding approval from the Finance Committee in the current legislative session for target completion in around three years.

Discussion

Capital cost of the projects

9. Members in general welcomed the Administration's endeavour to increase the supply of car parking spaces in the New Territories via the proposed public vehicle park ("PVP") projects. Notwithstanding this, the Deputy Chairman, Mr Tony TSE, Mr Wilson OR, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed concern on the high estimated capital cost of the three projects. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that according to the estimated capital cost, each car parking space in the proposed PVPs in Sheung Shui and Tung Chung would cost about \$1.27 million and \$2.11 million respectively. He requested the Administration to provide explanation on how the estimated capital cost of these two projects was calculated when the funding application was submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration. Mr OR asked whether the Administration would re-assess the capital cost of the three projects in view of the prevailing economic situation and requested the Administration to provide written information in this regard.

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10. DSTH(T)3 advised that the estimated capital cost of a public works project would be affected by a host of factors, including but not limited to the foundation works, the electricity and fire services requirements of the project concerned. The relevant departments had been discussing with the Project Strategy and Governance Office ("PSGO") (previously known as the Project Cost Management Office) established under the Development Bureau proactively to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the three projects and the prudent use of public funds. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry on the difference in estimated capital cost between the proposed PVPs in Sheung Shui and Tung Chung, DSTH(T)3 explained that since the proposed PVP in Tung Chung would be constructed on reclaimed land, its estimated capital cost would be relatively higher when compared to that of the proposed PVP in Sheung Shui.

11. Mr Tony TSE expressed disappointment that the Administration failed to set out in its paper the measures taken to maximise land use and the

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Admin justifications for the high estimated construction cost of the projects. He considered that the information provided by the Administration could not adequately convince him to support the funding application. At the request of Mr TSE, DSTH(T)3 undertook to provide written supplementary information on the alternative location(s) and construction method(s) that had been explored by the Administration in respect of the proposed PVPs in Sheung Shui and Tung Chung.

Admin 12. In response to Mr SHIU Ka-fai's enquiry, Chief Architect/3, Housing Department ("HD") advised that the gross floor area ("GFA") of the proposed PVP in Sheung Shui was about 20 000 square metres. If the provisions for administrative cost and contingency were excluded, the average construction cost per parking space would be about \$1.08 million, which was comparable to that of similar projects recently implemented by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HKHA"). Depending on the number of storeys of the car park, the ancillary facilities to be provided therein as well as the unique conditions of the project site concerned, the average construction cost per parking space under HKHA projects would range from \$600,000 to \$2 million. Mr SHIU requested the Administration to provide information on the breakdown of the capital cost of the three projects.

3023TP - Public vehicle park at Areas 4 and 30 (Site 2), Sheung Shui

13. Mr CHAN Hak-kan enquired about the positioning of the proposed PVP in Sheung Shui. If the purpose of the proposed PVP was to address the parking shortage in the vicinity, given its location, he considered that the proposed PVP might not be able to address the strong demand for public parking spaces in the nearby Shek Wu Hui and Luen Wo Hui areas.

14. DSTH(T)3 responded that the number of parking spaces to be provided in a new public car park would hinge on the demand for parking spaces of the relevant district. As indicated in the Administration's paper, there were two fee-paying public car parks under short-term tenancy ("STT") at Areas 4 and 30, Sheung Shui. These two STT car parks were vacated to make way for the public housing development ("PHD") project to be funded and implemented by HKHA in Areas 4 and 30. Despite that the PHD project would provide ancillary parking spaces to cater for its self-generated parking demand, the Transport Department ("TD") considered that there was a genuine need for the proposed PVP to meet the local demand for public parking spaces in view of the termination of the two STT car parks. Since the proposed PVP and the adjacent PHD were both located at the same site, the planning and construction of these two projects would be considered as a whole. In response to Mr CHAN Hak-kan's enquiry, DSTH(T)3 confirmed that parking spaces

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equipped with electric vehicle charging facilities would be provided in the proposed PVP.

15. Expressing concern over the decreasing number of park-and-ride car parks in the New Territories, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok enquired if the proposed PVP would provide park-and-ride parking discounts to drivers who parked their cars at the proposed PVP for changing to public transport.

16. Assistant Commissioner/Task Force, TD ("AC/TF") advised that the Po Shek Wu Estate Public Car Park in Sheung Shui provided about 150 parking spaces for private cars under the park-and-ride scheme. TD would explore with the MTR Corporation Limited and other relevant organisations the feasibility of providing park-and-ride concessions at the proposed PVP.

17. Mr CHAN Hak-kan enquired whether the Administration had considered the feasibility of providing mechanised double-deck car parking system at the proposed PVP. Mr LUK Chung-hung opined that the Administration should consider installing automated parking systems ("APSs") at the proposed PVP so that more parking spaces could be provided within the same footprint.

18. AC/TF advised that currently TD was actively taking forward six pilot APS projects so as to consolidate experience in building, operating and managing different types of APSs for timely review, which would pave the way for wider application of APSs in government and privately-operated public car parks in future. AC/TF further advised that to tie in with the commencement of the PHD project in part of Site 1, a conventional multi-storey car park would be constructed with a view to expediting the works progress. Prior to the commissioning of the proposed PVP, a new STT car park with about 300 parking spaces would come into operation in part of Site 1 as an interim measure to address the public parking demand in the area.

19. AC/TF explained that after the commissioning of the proposed PVP, this STT car park would be terminated and the subject land so vacated would be handed over to HKHA for construction of the PHD project. In view of the above works schedule and the fact that the development of APSs in Hong Kong was still at a preliminary stage, the Administration considered it appropriate to construct a conventional car park in the area concerned. Nevertheless, the Administration undertook to actively consider the possibility of introducing APSs in other newly-built government car parks, in the light of the experience gained from the first APS pilot project in Tsuen Wan.

20. Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired about the feasibility of implementing PHD atop the proposed PVP with a view to optimising land use. DSTH(T)3

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responded that, following the principle of "single site, multiple uses", there would be a garden with leisure and recreational facilities, including a badminton court, a basketball court and landscaping areas, on the roof top of the PVP.

3024TP - Public vehicle park at Area 99, Tung Chung

21. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the justifications for the construction of an underground PVP at Area 99, Tung Chung, which in his view might attribute to the high capital cost of the project.

22. Chief Architect/2, HD ("CA/2") replied that the proposed PVP, public transport interchange ("PTI") and PHD at Area 99, Tung Chung would be planned and constructed in a holistic manner by HKHA. As a matter of fact, the permitted plot ratios for the project site had been fully utilised. Having regard to the building height restrictions and geological conditions of the area concerned, HKHA considered the sites selected for the above projects to be appropriate. CA/2 further advised that, constructing the proposed PVP above the PTI would reduce the building separation at low zone, and would not comply with the guidelines on building separation stipulated under the sustainable building design guidelines ("SBD guidelines") for granting GFA exemption, and would as a result reduce the housing yield of about 200 residential units in Area 99.

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23. Having regard to CA/2's response above, Mr Michael TIEN requested the Administration to provide information on the feasibility of providing APS or a few floors for parking atop the proposed PTI; and explain how such provision would affect the number of public housing units to be provided in the area concerned under the SBD guidelines. Citing the West Kowloon Cultural District Development as an example where the plot ratio restrictions had been relaxed, the Chairman called on the Administration to consider adopting the same approach in the New Territories.

24. Noting that some 4 800 residential flats would be provided under the PHD project at Area 99, Tung Chung, Dr CHENG Chung-tai opined that the proposed PVP with only about 80 public parking spaces would not be sufficient to meet the local parking demand. He held that the Administration had failed to cater for the parking needs of the district during the planning and design process.

25. DSTH(T)3 responded that the ancillary parking requirements for various development projects had been set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("HKPSG"). She stressed that the Government's transport policy was to encourage the use of public transport as far as possible and about

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90% of the total passenger trips were made on public transport. It might not be appropriate to assess the demand for private car parking spaces simply based on the population of the district concerned.

26. In response to Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's enquiry about the management of the proposed PVP, DSTH(T)3 advised that the PVP and its ancillary facilities would be managed by the Government upon completion. Mr LEUNG further enquired about the number of ancillary parking spaces to be provided under the PHD project at Area 99, Tung Chung. CA/2 advised that the PHD project concerned would provide 164, 18 and 25 ancillary private car parking spaces for residents, shoppers and visitors respectively.

B085TI - Public Transport Interchange at Tung Chung Area 99

27. Referring to the artist's impression of the project as included in the Administration's paper, Dr CHENG Chung-tai opined that the design of the proposed PTI could not keep abreast of the times. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung pointed out that the residents of Ping Yan Court in Tin Shui Wai had been suffering from noise problem arising from the operation of the nearby PTI. He was concerned that the design of the proposed PTI was similar to the one adjacent to Ping Yan Court and therefore requested the Administration to provide the detailed design of the proposed PTI after the meeting.

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Number of public parking spaces to be provided under the projects

28. Mr POON Siu-ping noted with concern that only around 10 parking spaces for light goods vehicles would be provided under the proposed PVP in Sheung Shui and that the proposed underground PVP in Tung Chung was a one-level PVP providing only about 80 public parking spaces. He asked whether the Administration had considered providing more parking spaces under these two projects to meet the longer term parking demand of the districts concerned and to better utilise precious land resources.

29. AC/TF advised that in determining the number of public parking spaces to be provided in a PVP project, TD would take into consideration the demand for public parking spaces around the development site to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the project. In this connection, TD had been monitoring the local parking needs including the utilisation of the car parks and the illegal parking activities in the vicinity of Areas 4 & 30 to determine the number of public parking spaces to be provided at the proposed PVP in Sheung Shui. Furthermore, the PHD project at Areas 4 and 30, Sheung Shui would provide ancillary parking spaces at the higher end of the current parking standards under

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the HKPSG for new developments to cater for its self-generated parking demand. In respect of the PVP project in Tung Chung, taking into account the utilisation of the car parks including the STT car park at Hei Tung Street and the illegal parking activities in the vicinity of Ying Tung Road, the provision of about 80 car parking spaces in the proposed PVP was considered sufficient to meet the local parking demand. Should the STT car park at Hei Tung Street be resumed for "Government, Institution or Community" uses in the future, TD would explore the need for provision of public car parking facilities thereat in order to cater for the parking demand of the district at that time.

Smart mobility

30. Mr Wilson OR considered that the design of the two proposed PVPs could not dovetail with Hong Kong's development into a smart city. He asked about the measures to be put in place upon commissioning of the PVPs for promoting smart mobility. DSTH(T)3 responded that among others, parking vacancy information of the proposed PVPs would be disseminated via TD's mobile application "HKeMobility".

31. Mr YIU Si-wing opined that the Administration should plan for the future development of car parks in Hong Kong with innovative thinking. He asked if the Administration had explored with the Innovation and Technology Commission and/or the experts concerned to make use of innovative technologies in the construction of smart car parks.

32. DSTH(T)3 reiterated that TD had taken forward a total of six APS pilot projects with a view to gaining experience in building, operating and managing different types of APSs and the associated financial arrangements. Through launching these pilot projects, the Administration would try to promote the development of smart parking in an innovative and forward-looking manner under the policy objective of optimising land uses. When identifying sites for launching APS pilot projects, the Administration would take into consideration a number of factors, including geographical environment and parking demand of the relevant district. The Administration would continue to promote the use of APSs in the long run.

Measures to increase the provision of car parking spaces

33. Mr CHAN Hak-kan asked about the measures that would be taken by the Administration to mitigate the problems of insufficient parking spaces in the New Territories. AC/TF responded that the Government's policy in the provision of parking spaces was to accord priority to considering the parking demand of commercial vehicles, and to provide an appropriate number of

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private car parking spaces if the overall development permitted, but at the same time not to attract passengers to opt for private cars in lieu of public transport, so as to avoid aggravating the burden on road traffic. Also, the Government's transport policy was to encourage the use of public transport. Given the above policy directions, a host of short-term and medium- to long-term measures were pursued in recent years to increase the number of parking spaces across the territory, including designating suitable on-street locations as night-time commercial vehicle parking spaces, utilising spaces underneath flyovers for designation as parking spaces, opening up more parking spaces at government buildings for public use during non-office hours, encouraging schools to allow student service vehicles to park within school premises after school hours, identifying suitable vacant lands without development timetable for STT car park use, and considering requiring suitable new developments to open up a certain number of ancillary parking spaces and loading/unloading bays as night-time public parking spaces for commercial vehicles.

Admin 34. Mr Wilson OR expressed concern that the problem of illegal parking in Kowloon had been worsening due to the shortage of parking spaces. He requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the proposed provision of public car parks in Kowloon in the next 10 years.

Summing up

35. The Chairman concluded that members in general considered that the information provided by the Administration on the three projects were insufficient. For instance, the Administration did not provide the number of parking spaces that had been provided by the two vacated STT car parks at Areas 4 and 30, Sheung Shui for members' reference. The Chairman also reminded the Administration to provide written supplementary information as requested by members at the meeting, including the breakdown of the cost estimates of the three projects.

V. Free-Flow Tolling System for government tolled tunnels and Tsing Sha Control Area

LC Paper No. CB(4)320/20-21(04) - Administration's paper on Free-Flow Tolling System for government tolled tunnels and Tsing Sha Control Area

LC Paper No. CB(4)320/20-21(05) - Paper on Free-flow Tolling System for Government Tolled

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Tunnels and Roads prepared by
the Legislative Council
Secretariat (Background brief)

Briefing by the Administration

36. At the invitation of the Chairman, DSTH(T)3 briefed members on the Administration's plan to implement free-flow tolling system ("FFTS") at government tolled tunnels and Tsing Sha Control Area ("TSCA") (hereafter collectively referred to as "Tolled Tunnels"). The Administration planned to introduce into the Legislative Council in March 2021 the FFTS Bill in order to provide the requisite legal backing for implementing FFTS at Tolled Tunnels. Principal Transport Officer/Management, Transport Department then briefed members on the details of FFTS and its implementation plan with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

(Post-meeting note: The PowerPoint presentation material was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)346/20-21(01) on 6 January 2021.)

(At 6:15 pm, the Chairman proposed and members raised no objection to extending the meeting for 15 minutes to 6:45 pm, and if necessary, further extending the meeting for a few minutes to allow all members who had indicated their intention to speak to raise their questions.)

Discussion

Implementation plan

37. The Deputy Chairman welcomed the Administration's policy initiative to implement FFTS at Tolled Tunnels. Noting that the Administration planned to start rolling out FFTS in around end 2022 by phases, and motorists would still need to stop at toll booths for manual toll payment at certain government tolled tunnels during the transitional period, he expressed concern that the said implementation arrangement might cause confusion to motorists. The Deputy Chairman enquired if it was possible to implement FFTS by two phases, the first phase would cover all the government tolled tunnels and TSCA while the two Build-Operate-Transfer ("BOT") tunnels, viz. Western Harbour Crossing and Tai Lam Tunnel, would be implemented as the second phase. He further asked if the Administration had considered the feasibility of implementing FFTS at Western Harbour Crossing and Tai Lam Tunnel before the Government's takeover of those tunnels in August 2023 and May 2025 to compress the implementation timetable.

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38. DSTH(T)3 responded that having regard to the fact that motorists were used to stopping at toll booths to pay tolls, the Administration planned to roll out FFTS by phases to ensure a smooth transition from the existing booth-mode toll collection to the boothless mode under FFTS. Besides, prior to the implementation of FFTS at a tunnel, it was necessary to install field equipment and facilities as well as removing toll booths thereat. It would be technically difficult and operationally undesirable to roll out FFTS at all Tolled Tunnels on the same day. DSTH(T)3 took note of the Deputy Chairman's view and advised that the Administration would monitor the adaptability of motorists and strive to compress the implementation timetable as appropriate.

Implementation details of free-flow tolling system

39. Mr Tony TSE supported in principle the legislative amendments for implementing FFTS at Tolled Tunnels. He enquired whether the vehicle owners had to pay for the re-issuance of the vehicle-specific toll tag ("VTT"). DSTH(T)3 responded that the first issue of a VTT to a particular vehicle would be free-of-charge and the usable life of a VTT would be about seven years. Re-issuance, including replacement, of VTT would in general be at a cost to the vehicle owner on a full cost-recovery basis, which was estimated to be about \$60 to \$70 each.

40. In response to Mr TSE and the Chairman's further enquiry, DSTH(T)3 advised that a VTT would only store two pieces of digital information, namely tag identification number (i.e. the serial number of the tag) and encrypted vehicle identification number which was a unique identification number assigned by TD and was not equivalent to the car plate number. As such, upon ownership transfer of a vehicle, the new vehicle owner could still use the original VTT affixed to the vehicle concerned (if any) but he/she should notify the toll service provider ("TSP") if there were any changes to the payment means in association with the VTT, so that tolls could be debited from a correct payment account.

41. Referring to paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper, Mr Tony TSE enquired about the reasons for proposing the legislative amendment to the effect that failure to pay toll would no longer be subject to penalty of imprisonment. The Chairman raised a similar question. Both members opined that imprisonment penalty should be retained for greater deterrent effect. Mr TSE also expressed concern about the additional administrative costs incurred to recover tolls under the proposed mechanism.

42. DSTH(T)3 advised that the Administration had reviewed the penalty levels of road traffic offences stipulated under the existing legislation and

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considered that proper balance should be maintained among these penalties. As proposed in the FFTS Bill, toll payments might be made in arrears through designated channels within a grace period of seven business days. TD would impose surcharges against a responsible person who failed to pay tolls according to the stipulated timeframe. After reviewing the relevant provisions in the existing legislation, the Administration took the view that it was not necessary to include imprisonment penalty for the offence against toll evasion under the Bill.

43. Pointing out that the two or three lanes in the tunnel tube could not cope with the traffic flow funnelling in from multiple lanes of connecting roads, Mr Tony TSE and the Chairman questioned the Administration's view expressed in the paper that motorists needed not slow down when driving into the tunnel tube upon removal of all toll booths. Assistant Commissioner/Technical Services, TD ("AC/TS") replied that the speed limit at toll plaza areas was set at 50 km/hour at present. To ensure a smooth traffic flow upon implementation of FFTS, the design of the road layout of the existing toll plazas would be reviewed in accordance with the current road design standards. The speed limit of the road sections concerned would be set at 50 km/hour as well.

44. Mr SHIU Ka-fai believed that the general public would support the implementation of FFTS which would hopefully ease congestion at toll plazas caused by manual toll payment during peak hours at present. Mr SHIU pointed out that for certain motor vehicles, the space on windscreen available for affixing toll tags was limited. He asked if the Administration would consider consolidating the systems of various government services so that members of the public would be able to pay tolls or other government fees with only one single tag.

45. In response, AC/TS noted that for a very small portion of motor vehicles, the whole windscreen contained metal oxide which might affect detection by the FFTS field equipment. For these vehicles, their vehicle registration marks could be recognized through the Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology. The Administration would consider the wider application of toll tags, such as paying parking fees at government car parks, after the implementation of FFTS.

46. The Chairman enquired whether the existing automated payment service offered by the Autotoll Limited would still be available after the implementation of FFTS. DSTH(T)3 responded that it was the Administration's plan to remove toll booths, which were used for both manual toll payment and electronic payment service offered by the Autotoll Limited, for implementation of FFTS at both directions of a Tolled Tunnel at the same time,

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as far as practicable. In any event, since FFTS would be implemented by phases, tags for FFTS and Autotoll services would likely be used concurrently before full implementation of FFTS. Upon implementation of FFTS at all Tolled Tunnels, only FFTS would be used for toll payment.

47. Noting that some motorists might not need to use government tolled tunnels and roads, Mr POON Siu-ping enquired whether all vehicle owners would be required to provide to TD their email addresses or mobile phone numbers when renewing their vehicle licences. DSTH(T)3 responded that as FFTS was one of the key smart mobility initiatives pursued by the Administration, and toll tags would have a wider application in the long-run. For the implementation of FFTS, the Administration considered it not efficient to inform a vehicle owner of the outstanding toll for settlement before the expiry of the grace period by post. With the email addresses or mobile phone numbers provided by vehicle owners, the TSP could issue electronic toll payment notification as necessary. The Administration therefore proposed making it a mandatory requirement for all vehicles owners to provide such information to TD.

Facilitation measures for toll splitting between vehicle owners and drivers

48. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok noted that the TD was exploring special administrative measures and technologies that would facilitate toll splitting or toll payment diversion between a vehicle owner and a driver, including the adoption of "two-piece device". He enquired about the progress in this regard. AC/TS replied that TD was actively exploring the feasibility of the two-piece device and the relevant study was in good progress. Testing of prototype of the two-piece device was underway as well. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry, AC/TS advised that the feasibility of the two-piece device would be ascertained in around mid-2021.

49. Noting that with the adoption of two-piece device, tolls would be charged automatically to a pre-registered payment account of the driver when the two-piece device was used in a vehicle affixed with VTT, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok enquired about the person to be responsible for paying tolls if the automated payment could not be made successfully. AC/TS replied that the toll payment liability should rest with a vehicle owner as proposed in the FFTS Bill. In case there were disputes over toll payment, other measures to ascertain the use of the Tolerated Tunnels were also available, such as provision of a monthly statement to vehicle owners summarizing the monthly transaction records and tolls paid.

Action

Mandating the use of toll tags in future

50. Mr Michael TIEN considered that the Administration should mandate the use of toll tags after a grace period of say one to two months upon implementation of FFTS at the Lion Rock Tunnel, Shing Mun Tunnels and TSCA. Mr TIEN opined that heavy penalties should be imposed on non-compliant vehicle owners so as to achieve a stronger deterrent effect. DSTH(T)3 took note of Mr TIEN's view and responded that it was the Government's plan to mandate the use of toll tags with automated payment for all motor vehicles in future and the exact duration of the grace period was being considered.

Empty taxi lane at Eastern Harbour Crossing

51. Mr Michael TIEN asked how the Administration would ascertain if the taxis using empty taxi lane at Eastern Harbour Crossing ("EHC") were carrying passengers or not. AC/TS replied that TD was exploring the feasibility of installing infrared cameras to detect if there was any misuse of the empty taxi lane. On the other hand, suitable sites had been identified for setting up booths so as to facilitate visual inspection by the staff concerned as and when necessary.

52. The Chairman opined that the Administration should consider aligning the tolls of different government tolled tunnels for the return trip of empty taxis, thus obviating the need to set up the abovementioned booths for visual inspection. DSTH(T)3 advised that the subject matter mentioned by the Chairman was outside the scope of the present proposal and the Administration currently had no plan to extend the toll concession enjoyed by drivers of empty taxis using EHC to other government tolled tunnels.

53. Mr Michael TIEN said that to his understanding, there were only two to three empty taxis using EHC per minute during peak periods. He enquired if the Administration had considered allowing other vehicles to use the empty taxi lane for optimising the use of traffic lanes. AC/TS replied that since the empty taxi lane to be designated at EHC would be in the form of a large lay-by, not much additional space would be needed for this purpose. Besides, the staff of the tunnel operator might need to stop the taxis concerned when taking enforcement actions against misuse of the empty taxi lane. Mr Tony TSE expressed that the Administration should provide the statistics on the utilization rate of empty taxis at EHC to members for reference.

Action

Other views

54. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Mr Michael TIEN and Mr Tony TSE expressed concern about the Administration's policy in respect of the toll levels of government tolled tunnels and roads. Mr TIEN opined that collecting tolls at government tunnels and roads should be solely for the purpose of achieving traffic re-distribution. Mr TSE was of the view that the Administration should explain the rationale behind the toll levels of different government tolled tunnels and roads to members and the public in due course.

VI. Any other business

55. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:50 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
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