

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING ON 13 DECEMBER 2022
REPORT NO. 78 OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT – CHAPTER 2
Licensing services for drivers**

Opening Remarks of the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Chairman,

I would like to thank the Audit Commission for its comprehensive review and valuable comments with regard to the licensing services for drivers. I am also grateful to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Legislative Council for inviting the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB), the Transport Department (TD), the Lands Department and the Buildings Department to the hearing today to provide further information to the PAC.

The Government attaches great importance to the provision of driving test services, management of driving training schools and licensing control of private driving instructors, with a view to maintaining an efficient driving training and testing system for promotion of road safety. The Government will take appropriate follow-up actions on the Audit recommendations.

As regards the number of driving tests, the application for driving test has notably increased over the past few years. Based on the number of driving test forms, the application for road test increased by 73% as a whole in the last decade (i.e. from 2012 to 2021). During the epidemic, to tie in with the Government's anti-epidemic and social distancing measures, driving test services were intermittently suspended. As the waiting time for various driving tests was disrupted after each resumption of driving test services, TD had striven to deploy resources to arrange rescheduled tests for candidates affected by the suspension. TD has all along been taking feasible measures to increase the number of driving tests, including increase in manpower as well as improvement in efficiency and streamlining of procedures. Furthermore, TD will follow up on viable arrangements, including the adoption of technology and assignment of additional duties for driving examiners as far as practicable to boost the driving test output.

In respect of the Audit recommendation on regularly updating the computer question banks of written tests, TD has put in place a regular review system to ensure that review on the Location and Route Questions for the written test for taxi is conducted annually, whereas a comprehensive review on other question banks is conducted at least biennially or as necessitated by any

amendment of the existing legislation, in a bid to ensure that all questions and answer options are updated.

For the management of driving training schools, TD will strengthen monitoring of the progress of preparatory tasks of school operators during the relevant tender or selection exercises for schools in future and make sure that the schools have met all requirements before being designated by TD. TD will continue to conduct regular inspections in various driving training schools to ensure that their operations are in compliance with the Code of Practice.

Regarding the licensing and monitoring of private driving instructors (PDIs), TD will continue to regularly review and closely monitor the situation of “inactive” PDIs to assess the need for issuing new licences. Meanwhile, TD will continue to put in place measures to ensure that driving instructors only give driving instructions for vehicle classes according to their entitlements. In addition, TD also conducts in-car observation of PDIs on a regular basis and has extended the time for conducting observation from normal office hours to all regular training hours since mid-2022, including Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays to strengthen the monitoring of the teaching quality of PDIs.

TLB will provide continuous support for the work of relevant departments to persistently review and improve the driving test services, the management of driving training schools as well as the licensing control of PDIs so as to proactively follow up on and implement the Audit recommendations, thereby providing better services for the public.

My colleagues and I will be happy to answer questions from Members. Thank you, Chairman.