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Paper for the Panel on Transport

Report of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Purpose

This paper reports on the deliberations of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") formed under the Panel on Transport ("the Panel") during the seventh Legislative Council.

The Subcommittee

2. Since the second term of the Legislative Council ("LegCo"), a subcommittee has been set up under the Panel to monitor matters relating to the planning and implementation of new railway projects and the operation of existing railways. In the current term of LegCo, the Panel agreed at its meeting on 17 February 2022 to appoint the Subcommittee, with its terms of reference and membership list set out in **Appendices 1 and 2** respectively.

3. In accordance with Rule 26(c) of the House Rules, the Subcommittee was granted approval by the House Committee ("HC") at its meetings on 31 March 2023 and 10 May 2024 respectively to continue its work for 12 months beyond the expiry of its work period. **HC** further **approved** at its meeting **on 9 May 2025** for **the Subcommittee to continue its work** beyond the expiry of its work period on 12 May 2025 **until the prorogation of the current term of LegCo**.

4. The Subcommittee has been chaired successively by Hon CHAN Han-pan (2022 legislative year), Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming (2023 legislative year), and Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu (2024 and 2025 legislative years), and has **held 16 meetings** (as at the end of

September 2025) with the Administration and the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL"), as well as conducted **two local site visits**. [1]

Deliberations of the Subcommittee

5. In the current term of LegCo, the Subcommittee has continued to follow up on:

(i) the progress of new railway projects;

(ii) the railway projects under planning;

(iii) the progress of introducing smart and green mass transit systems ("SGMTS"); and

(iv) the operation of existing railways.

I. Progress of new railway projects

6. The Subcommittee has been closely monitoring the progress of new railway projects proposed in the Railway Development Strategy 2014. Among them, the construction works for the **Tung Chung Line ("TCL") Extension, Oyster Bay Station, Tuen Mun South ("TMS") Extension, Northern Link ("NOL") Phase 1 Kwu Tung Station, and Hung Shui Kiu Station** have commenced and are expected to be **completed progressively from 2027 onwards**.[2] The advance works for the **NOL Main Line** have also commenced, with a target **completion by 2034**.

Tung Chung Line Extension

7. The Subcommittee was deeply **concerned about the progress of the TCL Extension project**. At a special meeting on 18 April 2023, members pointed out that the Administration had suggested an implementation timeframe of 2020 to 2024 for the TCL Extension. Members were concerned that residents of the **Tung Chung New Town Extension Area were expected to move in starting from 2024**, but the latest estimated

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[1] The two local visits include a visit to the construction site of MTR Kwu Tung Station on East Rail Line ("EAL") on 26 November 2024 and a visit to the Data Studio and Ho Tung Lau Depot of MTR Corporation Limited on 10 December 2024.

[2] The **expected commissioning dates** of the five new railway projects are: Kwu Tung Station (**2027**), Tung Chung Line Extension (**2029**), Tuen Mun South Extension, Siu Ho Wan Station and Hung Shui Kiu Station (**2030**).

completion of the TCL Extension was **2029**, which raised concerns about the progress.

8. MTRCL explained that due to the high complexity of the project, there was limited room for compressing the works schedule. In addition, the proposed station works involved track diversion on the existing operating railway line, which could only be carried out during non-traffic hours at night. MTRCL indicated that it had commenced some of the advance works and leverage on the latest technologies to enhance works efficiency. Members **suggested that MTRCL should suspend current train services earlier at night to extend the night-time works sessions**. The Administration advised that it would consider members' suggestion.

Kwu Tung Station and Tuen Mun South Extension

9. At its meeting on 20 October 2023, the Subcommittee was briefed on the financial arrangements and latest progress of the Kwu Tung Station ("KTU") and TMS Extension projects. Members were **concerned about the surge in the costs of the two projects**. Regarding the KTU project, the estimated capital cost provided by the Administration in 2021 was about $3.5 billion, but the latest cost in 2023 had risen to $9.8 billion. Even excluding the $3.9 billion for planning and design and some advance works of the NOL Main Line, **the estimated cost for the KTU project still increased by $2.4 billion, representing a nearly 70% increase**. The estimated capital cost of the TMS Extension project also increased from $11.4 billion in 2015 to $15.8 billion in 2023. Members requested the Administration to give a detailed account of the reasons.

10. As explained by the Administration,[3] the estimated costs of the TMS Extension and KTU projects provided in 2020 and 2021 respectively were calculated based on 2015 prices, while **the latest costs were calculated based on 2023 prices**. Apart from the increase in prices and the need to improve station design and equipment in accordance with the latest standards, **additional risk mitigation measures were confirmed necessary following site investigation and tests during the detailed planning and design stage**. Also, the costs were updated based on the checked and verified capital cost estimates were adopted.

11. In addition, members were also **concerned about the detailed design of the TMS Station at Wu King Road under the TMS Extension project.** The Administration has provided a supplementary information paper in response to members' concerns.[4]

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[3] Please refer to LC Paper No. CB(4)1089/2023(01).

[4] Please refer to LC Paper No. CB(3)150/2025(01).

Northern Link

12. At the meeting on 6 December 2024, members **urged the Administration to leverage on innovative technologies and policy measures to shorten the construction time of the NOL Main Line project**, and to consider **commencing works on the NOL Main Line and Spur Line projects concurrently** for enhanced cost-effectiveness. Members also suggested that the design should **anticipate connecting NOL with the future Central Rail Link ("CRL")** to **enhance synergy**.

13. According to the Administration's latest report, the detailed planning and design of the NOL Spur Line were expected to commence in 2025, with the target of **advancing the commissioning of the NOL Spur Line to tie in with that of the NOL Main Line by 2034 or earlier**. As the Government had preliminarily proposed a station in Kam Tin for CRL, the Administration already requested MTRCL to consider the technical arrangements for connecting NOL with CRL in the design of NOL, and would explore ways to enhance synergy, with a view to providing convenience to the public and facilitating passenger diversion at the same time.

II. Railway projects under planning

14. The Government was actively taking forward **two cross-boundary railway projects: the Hong Kong–Shenzhen Western Rail Link (Hung Shui Kiu–Qianhai) ("HSWRL") and the aforementioned NOL Spur Line**. The Task Force for Hong Kong-Shenzhen Co-operation on Cross-Boundary Railway Infrastructure" ("Task Force") approved the second stage study report of the HSWRL project in November 2024 and established two teams[5] to closely collaborate on taking forward the project work, with the target of **commissioning the Hong Kong and Shenzhen sections of HSWRL simultaneously in 2035**. The Administration obtained funding approval from the Finance Committee on 27 June 2025 for 70TR

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[5] The two teams are (a) "Office for Implementing Cross-Boundary Railway Projects", which is responsible for taking forward the feasibility study, investigation, design, construction, and operation of the railway projects; and (b) "Legal Group", which is responsible for the discussion and clarification of laws and regulations of the two places regarding investment, construction and operating arrangement, and the specific arrangements for Hong Kong to exercise jurisdiction in the Mainland, etc.

"Hong Kong Section of Hong Kong–Shenzhen Western Rail Link (Hung Shui Kiu–Qianhai) – Investigation and Design". [6]

15. When the Subcommittee was consulted on the above projects, some members expressed the view that, regarding the site selection of the co-location boundary control facilities for HSWRL, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR Government") should **seek** from the Central Government **the setting up of checkpoints at both Shenzhen Bay and Qianhai Stations**, so as to enhance the overall cost-effectiveness of the project. Members also suggested that the Administration should **allow flexibility in the design of** the proposed project's **interchange stations and signalling systems, etc.**, for **better connection/extension** in the future if necessary.

16. In addition to HSWRL, the Hong Kong Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint[7] announced at the end of 2023 also proposed a number of new strategic railways. Members noted that to tie in with the development of Tseung Kwan O Area 137, the Administration was **carrying out preliminary preparatory work for the Tseung Kwan O Line ("TKL") Southern Extension** and had already invited MTRCL to submit a proposal for the project.

17. As for other projects, including **the NOL Eastern Extension, the Northeast New Territories Line and CRL**, the Administration advised that it was **preparing for the next stage of implementation** and would report the progress to the Subcommittee in due course.

III. Progress of introducing smart and green mass transit systems

18. The Subcommittee received a briefing from the Administration at its meeting on 4 October 2024 on the latest progress of the three SGMTS projects in East Kowloon ("EK"), Kai Tak ("KT") and Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen ("HSK/HT"). The works timetable set by the Administration is as follows:

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[6] The Administration obtained support from the two committees at the meetings of the Subcommittee and the Public Works Subcommittee on 31 March 2025 and 4 June 2025 respectively.

[7] The Hong Kong Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint was promulgated on 12 December 2023, which formulates a planning framework for the city's future transport infrastructure development, and outlines the strategic railway and major road networks which can meet the transport and logistics demand up to 2046 and beyond.

	East Kowloon Project	**Kai Tak Project**	**Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen Project**
Tendering	2026	2025	2026
Award of contract	2027	2026	2027
Completion/ Commissioning	**Completed by 2033 or earlier**	**Commissioned in 2031**	**Completed by2030**

Smart and green mass transit system in East Kowloon ("SGMTS-EK")

19. Regarding the EK project, members requested the Administration to explore measures to **compress the construction schedule and strive for early commissioning**. Members also expressed concerns that the proposal for the section from **Ma Yau Tong to Yau Tong** to operate in a tunnel might significantly increase construction costs, and suggested a **non-tunnel** alternative to reduce costs.

20. The Administration pointed out that the EK project would have an alignment of about seven kilometres, passing through developed areas. The Administration would study the feasibility of adopting methods such as Modular Integrated Construction or the use of prefabricated modules to minimize on-site construction works, **with the target of commissioning by 2033 or earlier**.

21. As for the tunnel form adopted for **the eastern section from Ma Yau Tong to Yau Tong**, the Administration explained that as the Lam Tin North area is traversed by Pik Wan Road and Lin Tak Road, both with heavy traffic, and is surrounded by numerous buildings, adopting a tunnel section would be a **more prudent** option. The Administration would invite system suppliers and contractors to submit expressions of interest proposing more suitable and convenient lightweight system and alignment options, so as to minimize impacts on traffic and nearby residents, and to **reduce the length of the tunnel section**. The objective would be to allow the Lam Tin North section in the finalized alignment to be **built in the form of an elevated viaduct**.

22. Some members considered the distance between Ma Yau Tong and Yau Tong to be relatively long and **suggested including an intermediate station at Lam Tin North** to enhance the system's efficiency. The

Administration indicated that it was soliciting opinions through the expression of interest exercise and would consider members' suggestions. [8]

Smart and green mass transit system in Kai Tak ("SGMTS-KT")

23. Regarding the Kai Tak project, members urged the Administration to consider extending the project to Kwun Tong or Yau Tong MTR stations. Some members **suggested that the Administration build a connecting bridge across the Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter to extend the alignment of the system to Cha Kwo Ling and Yau Tong**, so as to enhance overall transport efficiency. The Administration advised that it was consulting the industry through expressions of interest on the proposal to connect the Kai Tak project to Yau Tong.[9]

24. Some members suggested that upon commissioning of the Kai Tak Sports Park, special arrangements should be implemented on days when major events or concerts are held **with the adoption of a "one long-haul followed by three short-haul" train service pattern**, i.e. one out of every four trains departing from Kai Tak would run the full course to the cruise terminal, while the other three would terminate at the Sports Park station and make a U-turn, running at a frequency of one train per minute. As each train can carry 500 passengers, **the system could clear 15 000 passengers within half an hour**. To this end, the tender requirements should stipulate that space be reserved at the Sports Park station for interchange and enable train turnaround. The Administration advised that it would give detailed consideration to the suggestion.

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8 The Government published in the Gazette on 20 June 2025 the scheme for the Smart and Green Mass Transit System in East Kowloon ("SGMTS-EK") in accordance with the Railways Ordinance (Cap. 519). SGMTS-EK is about seven kilometres long with nine stations. The termini will be connected to MTR Choi Hung Station and Yau Tong Station respectively, with alignment passing through Choi Wan, Shun Lee, Shun On, Sau Mau Ping, Po Tat, Ma Yau Tong and **Lam Tin North**, serving over 300 000 residents in Kwun Tong uphill areas.

9 The Government published in the Gazette the scheme for the Smart and Green Mass Transit System in Kai Tak ("SGMTS-KT") in accordance with the Railways Ordinance (Cap. 519). SGMTS-KT is about 3.5 kilometres long with six stations. The termini will be connected to the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal and MTR Kai Tak Station respectively, with intermediate stations at Shing King Street, Kai Tak Sky Garden, Shing Fung Road Park and Kai Tak Sports Park, serving a population and visitors of around 50 000 residing and working in the area.

Smart and green mass transit system in Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen ("SGMTS-HSK/HT")

25. For the HSK/HT project, **given that there was currently no MTR station in northern Tin Shui Wai**, members requested the Administration to consider **extending the project alignment to further north of Tin Shui Wai**. The Administration advised that the entire system in HSK/HT was about 16 kilometres long, to be implemented in phases, with the HSK section as Phase 1, and it would strive to tie in with the major new population intake of the HSK New Development Area. At present, the revised alignment of the system would connect with Chung Fu Stop. As regards whether the alignment could extend to the further north of Tin Shui Wai, the Administration advised that it would consider in detail.

South Island Line (West)[10]

26. At the Subcommittee meeting on 6 December 2024, members expressed concerns about **the visual and noise impacts** created by the South Island Line (West) ("SIL(W)") project, which would be **built in the form of an elevated viaduct**. Members suggested that the Administration conduct more public consultation before finalizing the detailed design, and **enhance the connectivity with housing estates and the existing railway system**.

27. Members were particularly concerned that **after the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, the number of flats would be 1.3 times the current number, reaching 12 000**. They questioned whether the carrying capacity of SGMTS would be sufficient to meet the service demand, and **suggested increasing the service frequency** as well as expediting project completion. The Administration advised that SGMTS could generally serve approximately 10 000 passenger trips per hour in a single direction, i.e. 20 000 in both directions, which would be sufficient to meet the needs of residents and the working population along SIL(W).

28. The Administration supplemented that its target was to **commence preliminary construction works in 2027, aiming to dovetail with the redevelopment plan of Wah Fu Estate**. The Administration undertook to examine different options for enhancing the speed and efficiency of the project, with a view to accelerating its implementation.

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[10] The proposed smart and green mass transit system is a transit system of medium carrying capacity mainly running on dedicated elevated viaducts.

IV. Operation of existing railways

Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL")

29. The Subcommittee discussed at the meeting on 5 July 2024 the latest progress in enhancing the services of the XRL Hong Kong Section. Members noted that since the resumption of services of the XRL Hong Kong Section in January 2023, the patronage had exceeded the 2019 level, with **an annual patronage of up to 20 million passenger trips**. To cope with the growth in XRL patronage and enhance services, MTRCL, in addition to increasing the number of directly connected destinations and train frequency, also enhanced the ticketing arrangements for the XRL Hong Kong Section and the facilities at the West Kowloon Station("WKS"). In June 2024, the XRL Hong Kong Section launched the **sleeper train service** between Hong Kong WKS and Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Hongqiao Station, enriching the travel options for both leisure and business travellers.[11]

Catering facilities in Departure Concourse

30. Members **expressed concern that there were currently no catering facilities in the Departure Concourse on Level B3 of the XRL station**, causing inconvenience to passengers. The Administration pointed out that shops and catering facilities were available outside the waiting concourse of WKS, where passengers could purchase food and beverages before entering the gate. **The Level B3 Departure Concourse forms part of the Mainland Port Area** ("MPA"). The Administration was **discussing** with the relevant Mainland authorities and MTRCL the arrangements for **providing catering services and shops in the waiting concourse located within the MPA**.

31. In addition, some members noted that **the usage rate of the lounge in the Departure Concourse was low**, and suggested that MTRCL consider how to make best use of the space. MTRCL advised that it would continue to enhance the relevant supporting facilities and services at WKS, including the lounge within MPA, and would continue to take into account passenger feedback in improving services to meet travellers' needs.

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[11] For details on enhancements of train services of the XRL Hong Kong Section, newly launched measures to facilitate passengers' commuting, and enhancements of facilities at the West Kowloon Station ("WKS"), please refer to LC Paper No. CB(4)916/2024(03).

Enhancing air-rail intermodal transport services and streamlining procedures

32. Members suggested that the Administration **leverage the convenience of XRL and Hong Kong's advantage as a regional aviation hub to enhance air–rail intermodal transport services**, simplify the cumbersome "exit and re-entry" procedures, and integrate the services between WKS and Airport Station, so as to attract more Mainland passengers to combine XRL and air travel.

33. MTRCL advised that it had been discussing with the Airport Authority Hong Kong ("AAHK") the arrangements for **allowing XRL passengers travelling onward by air to complete check-in procedures at WKS** thereby providing further convenience to passengers. **MTRCL undertook to continue discussions with AAHK** and follow up on the matter.

34. Some Members suggested that MTRCL **draw reference from the Flight Token service available at Hong Kong International Airport** to simplify gate-passing procedures at WKS — for example, **enabling passengers to present their travel documents once only**, after which biometric facial recognition would be used to complete all the procedures, thereby **obviating the need to repeatedly present documents**. **MTRCL advised that it would explore ways to reduce the number of times passengers are required to present documents and tickets within WKS**.

Increasing directly connected destinations and expanding sleeper train services

35. Members suggested **increasing** the number of **directly connected destinations** for the XRL Hong Kong Section, and **introducing sleeper train services departing in the evenings and arriving the following mornings** to other long-haul destinations beyond Beijing and Shanghai **(e.g. Sichuan and Chengdu)**. In addition, some members were of the view that the current sleeper train services between Hong Kong and Beijing/Shanghai, which operated only from Fridays to Mondays, were insufficient. They thus **suggested adding services from Tuesdays to Thursdays**, as well as **providing independent compartments for one to two persons** to cater for the needs of individual passengers in addition to family travellers.

36. MTRCL advised that it was discussing with the relevant Mainland authorities the feasibility of increasing long-haul destinations and sleeper train services departing in the evenings and arriving in the mornings. As regards the suggestion of introducing sleeper train services to Beijing or Shanghai from Tuesdays to Thursdays, MTRCL explained that the relevant

trains would need to use tracks and platforms on the Mainland section of XRL, which would affect the maintenance windows for various train routes. Nevertheless, **MTRCL undertook to continue discussions with the Mainland railway authorities on the feasibility of increasing train services**.

Flexi-trip Arrangement and capacity of West Kowloon Station

37. Members noted that the Same-day Flexi-trip Arrangement [12] currently applied only to services terminating at Futian Station or Shenzhenbei Station. Some members suggested that MTRCL consider **extending the Flexi-trip Arrangement to more train services** and **to destinations beyond Futian and Shenzhenbei**. In addition, some members suggest that, apart from **allowing Flexi-trip passengers to change, on the day of travel, their tickets to Non-reserved Seat Tickets (i.e. standing tickets)**, MTRCL should also consider making such non-reserved seats available to passengers unable to purchase tickets, allowing them to **buy** such tickets within 30 minutes before departure **on a "buy-and-board" basis**.

38. MTRCL responded that the suggestion involved real-time ticketing adjustments which would directly affect train services on the Mainland section of XRL, and **it would need to review with the relevant Mainland authorities whether there was scope to introduce the Flexi-trip Arrangement at other directly connected destinations**. As regards the suggestion on non-reserved seats, MTRCL advised that it would assess passenger demand and operational arrangements, and would actively consider the suggestion if warranted.

39. Members also expressed concern as to whether WKS had sufficient capacity to cope with the continued growth in patronage and service frequencies. In response, MTRCL advised that it had **reviewed patronage and platform utilization at WKS**, and expected that the number of platforms would be **sufficient to meet the projected passenger flow up to 2030**.

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[12] MTRCL introduced the Same-day "Flexi-trip" Arrangement on 14 August 2023. Under the "Flexi-trip" Arrangement, Passengers travelling between WKS and Futian Station may alter to designated trains between the two stations up to three times on the same day for free via mobile application, ticketing machines, ticketing counters in stations, etc. The "Flexi-trip" Arrangement has been further extended to Shenzhenbei Station since 18 March 2024.

Railway incidents

I. Major incidents in 2022

(i) Tsuen Wan Line train incident[13]

40. At its meeting on 2 December 2022, the Subcommittee discussed the Tsuen Wan Line ("TWL") incident. According to MTRCL's preliminary investigation report, the incident was related to the collision between the train and a metallic protection barrier on the trackside.

Installation of smart sensors inside train compartments and tunnels

41. Members suggested that MTRCL should i**nstall sensors inside train compartments** so that the Operations Control Centre ("OCC") could immediately identify any irregularities on the trains. MTRCL advised that the new trains, which were now being progressively put into service, were equipped with smart sensors which would **transmit information on train door condition to the train captain's compartment and OCC**. In addition, members also suggested **the installation of smart sensors inside tunnels**, as well as closed-circuit television systems at all rail crossovers of the entire railway network. MTRCL said that in preparation of the investigation report, it would study the effectiveness of such devices in enhancing the safety of railway operations.[14]

Conditions of and maintenance work for old trains

42. Members were concerned whether the incident was related to the ageing of trains, and whether MTRCL would **expedite the train replacement programme**. MTRCL advised that the new trains had commenced service on 27 November 2022 and had generally been operating

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[13] On the morning of 13 November 2022, a Tsuen Wan Line ("TWL") train bound for Central was involved in an incident while entering Yau Ma Tei Station. After approximately two train cars had pulled into the platform, two pairs of platform-facing doors became dislodged. MTR station staff immediately evacuated the passengers and arranged feeder bus services to operate between railway stations affected by the incident. Normal TWL service resumed on the day following the incident.

[14] The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("ESMD") had instructed MTRCL to conduct inspections and maintenance works for similar metallic protection barriers across the MTR network and engaged independent experts to provide advice on improvement measures, so as to ensure that the maintenance measures were appropriate and the railway was safely operated. In addition, MTRCL had established an investigation panel to conduct a detailed investigation into the incident, with the relevant government departments also participating in the investigation.

smoothly. The replacement programme involving 93 trains of the urban lines was planned to be completed by 2028-2029. MTRCL supplemented that **the aforesaid incident was unrelated to the asset life of the old trains**. In recent years, MTRCL had **invested an average of HK$10 billion annually in asset maintenance to ensure that trains would remain in good operating condition until retirement**. Members suggested that MTRCL **set up a maintenance fund**, and MTRCL undertook to consider the suggestion.

43. Members were concerned whether the preventive maintenance works carried out by MTRCL included **the inspection of metallic protection barriers**. MTRCL responded that the metallic protection barriers were part of the railway infrastructure. It would review the structural maintenance arrangements set out in the maintenance guidelines.

Procedures for passenger detrainment

44. Members expressed concern that passengers had to walk on the railway track to leave the scene after the incident. MTRCL advised that it had **provided training on safety rules to operating staff** to enhance their knowledge on **assisting passengers to leave the train in case of emergency** so that they could apply the rules as appropriate. As regards the entire contingency system and the detrainment procedures, MTRCL would provide enhanced training to its staff and utilize technology to enable frontline staff to understand the real-time situation more easily.

45. Members were of the view that in case of train incidents, OCC should instruct all the trains in the vicinity to stop service for the sake of safety. MTRCL responded that the investigation report would examine in detail the contingency and related procedures adopted by OCC at the time of the incident, and it would take members' suggestions into account.

Upgrading of railway line signalling systems

46. The Subcommittee also received an update from MTRCL on the progress of upgrading the signalling system for railway lines at the meeting on 2 December 2022. Members were informed that MTRCL had decided to discontinue the time-consuming and complicated software refactoring and rectification work and adopt the contractor's standard core product and configurations instead. According to the current programme. **The new signalling system for TWL was expected to be commissioned in 2025-2026, while the overall project was expected to be completed in 2028-2029**.

47. MTRCL explained that since the TWL incident, MTRCL had been urging the contractor to implement various improvement measures and exploring feasible alternatives in parallel. MTRCL's primary consideration was to ensure the safety and reliability of the new signalling system.

(ii) Tseung Kwan O Line train incident[15]

48. The Subcommittee held a special meeting on 13 December 2022 to discuss the TKL train incident. According to the preliminary investigation report submitted by MTRCL, the incident was suspected to have been caused by the dislodgment of a component of a train coupler. MTRCL had conducted a fleet check of similar couplers.

Maintenance and repair of the component in question

49. Members were concerned about **the reasons for the dislodgment of the buffer concerned**. MTRCL advised that regarding the reasons for the dislodgment of the buffer, it would conduct investigation from various angles[16], including the operation, design and process of using the device, and give an account to the public as soon as possible. MTRCL advised that the component concerned was widely used elsewhere and it was enquiring the supplier whether similar failures had occurred in other railway systems. As to whether **the supplier would be held accountable**, MTRCL advised that it would take appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with the contract terms. MTRCL had invited experts from the original manufacturer to Hong Kong to assist in investigating the cause of the incident.

50. Some Members suggested that the Administration should **require MTRCL to shorten the inspection cycle of components** and to disassemble the components when carrying out inspections. The Administration advised that as the component concerned was specially designed, when carrying out inspections during the period between regular

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15 At about 8:30 am on 5 December 2022, when a North-Point-bound Tseung Kwan O Line ("TKL") train was approaching Tseung Kwan O Station, a component of a train coupler was suspected to have been dislodged. About 1 500 passengers on board were arranged to leave the train via the emergency exit at the front of the train and walked along the track for a distance of about three train cars to evacuate to the platform of Tseung Kwan O Station. As a result of the incident, train service between Tiu Keng Leng Station and Po Lam Station/LOHAS Park Station on the TKL was suspended. Service on TKL gradually resumed normal at around 12:30 pm.

16 The Administration had instructed MTRCL to conduct an investigation into the incident and submit a report to the Administration, as well as to conduct a comprehensive review of the relevant asset management and maintenance regime. The Administration would also set up an Independent Monitoring Panel to closely oversee the entire review work.

overhauls (when the component was returned to the original manufacturer), MTRCL would not disassemble the component for inspection. MTRCL would further examine the specialized components and the risk assessment conducted by the original manufacturer to ensure the safe operation of the components during the period between overhauls. Some other Members suggested that MTRCL should **consider using imaging artificial intelligence and installing sensors to monitor the operation of various components of the railway system**. MTRCL advised that it would actively consider the suggestion.

The role of the Administration as a regulatory body

51. Members noted **that the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD")** had commenced **Comprehensive and Direct Assessment ("C&DA")** on the operation and maintenance procedures of MTR facilities **since July 2019**, to **proactively assess** the management systems of MTRCL's **four major railway assets (namely permanent way, power distribution system, rolling stock and signalling systems)**, as well as the Safety Management Systems of various operating railway lines. Members enquired about the reasons for the Administration's decision to commence the relevant assessment, and whether EMSD had conducted spot checks on the maintenance work of MTRCL.

52. The Administration advised that the purpose of C&DA was to review and improve the routine procedures and enhance railway safety on an on-going basis. EMSD would conduct assessments on procedures concerning the critical systems of MTRCL and make improvement recommendations such as increasing resources and making the best use of technology. Spot checks would also be conducted. EMSD **had made more than 1 000 recommendations to MTRCL, over 800 of which had been followed up by MTRCL** and the Corporation was actively following up on the newer recommendations. [17]

53. Some Members suggested that the remunerations and bonuses of MTRCL's senior management and the MTR Fare Adjustment Mechanism ("FAM") should be linked to railway incidents. There was also a suggestion that the Administration should consider penalizing MTRCL's senior management for the occurrence of railway incidents. The Administration

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[17] According to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(3)774/2025(02)), by Q1 2025, EMSD had completed 52 routine audits and 12 special audits, basically completing the first cycle of audits of all systems in the 12 railway lines, with more than 1 300 improvement recommendations made to the senior management of the MTRCL for enhancing the safety and reliability of railway operation. More than 90% of the recommendations had been implemented by the MTRCL, while the remaining were being followed up continuously.

responded that **when the MTRCL Board of Directors considered paying out the performance-linked remunerations to the management every year, it would consider the overall performance of the Corporation, including cases of serious incidents**. Moreover, the Secretary for Transport and Logistics had written to the Chairman of the MTRCL Board of Directors, requiring the latter to consider the performance of MTRCL's senior management in providing safe and reliable railway services and in meeting public expectations, etc. when assessing their annual performance and remunerations. As for the penalty mechanism, the Administration responded that should the investigation results reveal that the incident was **caused by human negligence, MTRCL had a mechanism in place to penalize the staff concerned**.

Passage of two motions

54. At its meeting on 13 December 2022, the Subcommittee **passed two motions**[18], urging the Administration and MTRCL to **make public** the preliminary investigation report and the subsequent detailed **investigation report of the incidents**, and urging the Administration to **conduct a comprehensive review of and make improvements to the railway maintenance and contingency arrangements**. MTRCL was also requested to conduct a comprehensive review of its staffing establishment and remuneration package to **retain talents**, and to **address the problem relating to outsourced maintenance works and term workers**, so as to **ensure maintenance quality** and **prevent the recurrence of similar incidents**.

55. The Administration responded that[19] with the expansion of the railway network, the staffing establishment of MTRCL's maintenance staff had also increased correspondingly. In the five years prior to 2023, the increase in the staffing establishment of MTRCL's maintenance staff was similar to the increase in the length of the railway network, at about 15%. However, **recruitment in recent years had indeed been a challenge**. MTRCL had been recruiting more talents through hosting recruitment days and the launch of the "Employee Referral Programme". MTRCL had also conducted salary surveys for positions with recruitment difficulties due to challenges from manpower shortage, as well as positions with keen competition for talents, and make special salary adjustments as necessary to maintain market competitiveness.

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18 The wordings of the two motions are set out in LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1088/2022(01) and (02) respectively.

19 The Administration's written response to the two motions is set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)76/2023(01).

56. The Administration supplemented that in addition to implementing the above measures to strengthen the staff recruitment, MTRCL would adopt various arrangements to temporarily fill vacancies of full-time staff, including arranging **contract workers to assist in maintenance work under the supervision of MTR staff**. **Regardless of whether the maintenance work was carried out by MTRCL's own staff or contract workers**, **MTRCL adopted the same standards and requirements** to ensure that all maintenance work was carried out as planned and that railway operations were safe and reliable. According to the information provided by MTRCL, there were about 440 contract workers involved in maintenance work in November 2022, accounting for about 6% of the total maintenance workforce. **In the five years prior to 2023, the number of contract workers had declined by about 30%, with its proportion of the total maintenance workforce dropping from 9% to 6%**.

Comprehensive review of railway asset management and maintenance regime

57. The Administration advised that in view of the aforesaid two incidents, the MTRCL Board of Directors had requested the MTRCL management to conduct a comprehensive review of its railway asset management and maintenance regime to ensure that the management of railway assets remained at a high standard. On 23 December 2022, MTRCL announced the appointment of an Expert Panel to conduct the comprehensive review. On the same day, the Administration set up an Independent Monitoring Panel to closely monitor MTRCL's review work.

58. MTRCL **completed the comprehensive review of its railway asset management and maintenance regime in mid-2023**. At present, MTRCL was continuing to implement a series of follow-up measures, including **investing over HK$65 billion in the five years** from 2023 to 2027 in railway facility renewal and maintenance, and **accelerating the application of innovative technologies** in railway services and asset maintenance. MTRCL **was conducting a comprehensive review of the registration status of trackside assets,** establishing the necessary maintenance regime for each asset type, and planning to **establish a new Enterprise Asset Management System**[20]. MTRCL advised that in the future, it would **launch a digitized asset management system**, **set up a joint laboratory** with the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, **use big data** and more comprehensive analytical tools to

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[20] MTRCL introduced a new "Enterprise Asset Management System", using blockchain technology to integrate various asset lifecycle operations, enhance the asset management operations of the Hong Kong Transport Services and prepare for process digitalization, thereby achieving higher quality asset data management.

enhance risk anticipation, and strengthen the management of suppliers' products and contractors' works.

59. Members noted that **the South Island Line ("SIL") became the first example of application of the new Enterprise Asset Management System in 2024**. Some Members suggested that **the South Island Line (East)("SIL(E)") should implement fully automatic operation as soon as possible** to demonstrate the effectiveness of the new system in supporting smart transport.

Two engineering train incidents and Tseung Kwan O Line incident in 2025

60. The Subcommittee discussed at the meeting on 26 May 2025 the two engineering train incidents[21] which occurred on East Rail Line ("EAL") on 5 February and 27 April 2025 respectively, as well as the TKL incident on 22 May. [22]

Causes of the incidents and improvement measures

61. Members were concerned that three incidents had occurred within four months. Regarding the TKL incident, in which a short circuit occurred due to the displacement of an overhead line component, Members **suggested that MTRCL should install a smart monitoring system to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents**. As for the engineering train incidents, members were particularly concerned that, according to the investigation report on the 5 February 2025 incident submitted by EMSD, MTRCL's

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[21] Two engineering train incidents occurred on EAL in the early hours of 5 February and 27 April this year respectively. Both incidents involved the malfunctioning of MTR engineering train equipment after completing maintenance work on the tracks, and the vehicles were unable to be moved away from the relevant sections in time before the commencement of train services. The incident on 5 February involved the failure of a 25-tonne wagon structure on a crane engineering train to return to a level position; while the incident on 27 April involved equipment failure of the elevating platform of a vehicle used for overhead-line inspection. During the emergency recovery for both incidents, MTRCL maintained train services on the entire EAL, although the frequency of train services was affected, and additional journey time was needed.

[22] At about 5:14 pm on 22 May this year, the traction power to the overhead line between North Point Station and Yau Tong Station on TKL was interrupted due to the tripping of Direct Current Circuit Breakers. At about the same time, the signalling system of TKL was found to have failed. As a result, TKL train service was suspended. During the recovery process, MTRCL found that when different trains passed through the affected section, intermittent tripping of the traction power occurred. By 7:37 pm, the cause was identified to be related to the overhead line. Upon implementing further train regulation, TKL train service was partially resumed at 8:32 pm between Tiu Keng Leng Station and Po Lam Station/LOHAS Park Station. Full train service of TKL was resumed at 10:33 pm.

operational manual and recovery guidelines for the engineering train concerned did not cover specific recovery procedures in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, resulting in the team's inability to reset the system in a timely manner. Some members were of the view that this **highlighted room for improvement in MTRCL's risk management of incidents**, and that **the management should strengthen contingency plans for handling extreme situations** so as to enhance the capability of frontline staff in handling incidents and shorten the handling time. Members also urged MTRCL to **strengthen asset management and the vetting of manuals provided by suppliers**.

62. Regarding cable inspections, MTRCL responded that it had completed the reinforcement work for components of the same type as the overhead line involved, and was **studying the feasibility of introducing smart monitoring technology** to strengthen predictive testing. Regarding engineering train management, MTRCL advised that it had **installed a warning and alert system on the engineering train concerned** to assist operators in performing their tasks, and **would conduct a comprehensive review of the maintenance of more than 400 engineering trains**, with an **independent consultant** engaged to **provide professional advice** and improvement recommendations.

63. Members were also concerned whether the TKL incident was related to the absence of a signalling system upgrade, and enquired which railway lines were still using the old system and the progress of the signalling system upgrade programme. MTRCL advised that **the signalling system upgrade for TWL would be completed in 2026**, and that **the signalling system upgrade works for urban lines**, including TKL, **were being carried out progressively**. The "Communications Based Train Control" technology adopted by the new system **could enhance the reliability and efficiency of railway services**.

Contingency plans

64. Members were concerned that the TKL incident had occurred during peak hours, and that **the free shuttle bus service** provided by MTRCL **was inadequate and the directions given were unclear**. Regarding the temporary closure of certain entrances/exits of affected stations, which prevented the public from using station passageways (e.g. the passageway facilities at Po Lam Station connecting to nearby housing estates), members were concerned whether MTRCL had **formulated contingency plans for incidents occurring during peak service demand periods**. Members also enquired about the feasibility of manual operation of the cross-harbour tunnel section of TKL during incidents, and suggested that the Administration and MTRCL review the relevant contingency measures.

65. The Administration responded that **the Transport Department ("TD") would examine in detail how to strengthen the coordination of emergency responses among public transport operators in the event of unexpected incidents**, with a view to making the most appropriate and prompt arrangements after similar incidents to help minimize the impact on the public. On enhancing the MTR shuttle bus service, TD would **review the arrangements and operation of shuttle buses** with MTRCL.

66. MTRCL explained that the TKL signalling system was not configured for single line bi-directional working. If manual operation was to be adopted, apart from greatly increasing the journey time, safety risks would also increase due to the lack of protection by the signalling system under manual operation. In addition, MTRCL would **review how to optimize station management during incidents**, and assess the feasibility of opening certain areas (e.g. passageways) when stations were closed, so as to meet the needs of different members of the public while not affecting the accessibility of the latest train service arrangements to passengers.

Service Performance Rebate arrangement and management accountability

67. Members noted that under the Service Performance Rebate ("SPR") arrangement[23] of the Fare Adjustment Mechanism, **MTRCL was required to set aside $19.2 million in respect of the TKL incident and, together with the accumulated amount under the mechanism, MTRCL would arrange a Special Fare Day with half-fares**. Some Members questioned that the amount of the rebate was too low, and suggested that free rides be offered on the entire TKL instead. In addition, some Members enquired whether MTRCL's management should be held accountable for the incident, such as by having their salaries or bonuses reduced.

68. The Administration responded that under the SPR arrangement, the current rebate amount was calculated based on the duration and time period of the delay, with the amount for delays occurring during peak hours being 20% higher than that for general incidents, so as to more accurately reflect the impact of serious service delays on passengers. The Administration advised that at present, the remunerations of MTRCL's management were already linked to their performance, and the Administration would relay Members' suggestions to the Remuneration Committee of the MTRCL Board of Directors.

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[23] Under the relevant mechanism, MTRCL was required to set aside an amount for service disruptions of 31 minutes or more caused by factors within its control (including equipment fault or human error) to be given back to passengers through fare concessions. The amount to be set aside for each incident ranged from $1 million to $40 million.

69. MTRCL advised that apart from the half-price fare discounts on the Special Fare Day, it was exploring other feasible options, such as **identifying affected passengers through the MTR Mobile application and providing them with additional compensation directly**.

70. In view of the above incidents, some members further suggested that the Government should **review the existing SPR arrangement**. They commented that the current arrangement only calculated whether the journey time of the longest-delayed train was delayed by 31 minutes or more, rather than the total duration of the impact on train services. They also considered this calculation method unreasonable, as even if limited train service was maintained, a reduction in train frequency would already have a significant impact on the public. They therefore suggested that the current arrangement be changed so that **for every hour after the incident during which service had not fully resumed, a fine of $1 million would be imposed**. Some members also considered that the current mechanism should **include the number of passengers affected by the incident as a penalty criterion**.

71. The Administration responded that it had conducted regular reviews of the arrangement, with **the last review conducted in 2023**, and that enhancements had been made after listening to the views of the public and stakeholders. For train service delays caused by factors within MTRCL's control, **the maximum fine** per incident **had been increased to $40 million**. The Administration advised that it would continue to review the relevant mechanism.

Follow-up matters

72. The Government received detailed investigation reports from MTRCL on the EAL incident and the TKL incident on 27 May 2025 and 21 June 2025 respectively.[24] MTRCL advised that at the Government's request, it had also **formulated an action plan on incident prevention and handling**. The plan covered **a one-off special inspection of targeted critical assets** and a series of mid- to long-term measures, including **strengthening the monitoring and risk management of railway assets** to enhance the overall resilience of the railway network; **formulating plans** for extreme scenarios, **reinforcing drills and trainings** under different scenarios, and strengthening the decision-making and execution capacities of MTR staff during incidents; and **enhancing free shuttle bus arrangements and strengthening information dissemination** (including updates on repair work progress and suggestions on alternative routes) to

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[24] The reports are set out in Annexes 1 and 2 to the press release issued by the MTR Corporation Limited on 27 June 2025.

facilitate the public in planning their journeys according to the latest situation, and **rallying community support to assist affected passengers**.

Building a rail tech ecosystem

73. At the meeting on 4 October 2024, MTRCL briefed the Subcommittee on its work and progress in building a rail tech ecosystem. Since 2020, MTRCL had introduced innovative technologies to **promote railway intelligence**, so as to enhance operations, construction and asset management, thereby providing passengers with a better travel experience. In addition, MTRCL had **established the Global Innovation Department** to lead and implement the execution and development of innovation and technology strategies, and **set up the Operations Innovation Hub**, with the focus of **researching and implementing solutions for smart railway**.

Overcoming the "golden two-hour" constraint

74. Members were concerned about how MTRCL could make use of innovative technologies to conduct real-time monitoring of tracks and underframe equipment during service hours, so as to **overcome the "golden two-hour" constraint after train service ends at night**. Some members suggested that MTRCL should invest in the research and development of a **real-time track hardware monitoring system** to enable the prompt detection and rectification of hardware problems on individual track sections, thereby shortening service delay time.

75. MTRCL advised that in recent years, it had been **actively promoting smart maintenance** to strengthen the monitoring of railway assets, such as launching the Smart Passenger Instrumented Revenue Train ("SPIRT") on heavy rail to **further enhance predictive maintenance**. **By using SPIRT to conduct real-time inspections** and collect data during service hours, the need for static testing during the "golden two hours" could be reduced, thereby freeing up time for asset renewal and other tasks. As regards underframe equipment, MTRCL was **developing underframe inspection robots to carry out inspections**.

76. MTRCL advised that it would continue to conduct research with stakeholders in the rail tech ecosystem to seek breakthroughs in non-destructive testing technology. In addition, MTRCL had collaborated with **the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute to develop optical and imaging technologies for inspecting the performance of certain tunnel facilities**. To address the issue of signalling faults, MTRCL was **making use of big data and various Internet of Things devices** to monitor asset performance trends, with a view to

achieving **predictive maintenance** and minimizing the impact on passengers.

Industrialization of research and development outcomes

77. Members noted that MTRCL's past revenue mainly came from property development profits or fare and investment revenues. Some members suggested that MTRCL should leverage the building of a rail tech ecosystem to **industrialize its research and development ("R&D") outcomes, thereby diversifying its revenue sources** while promoting the development of technology in Hong Kong. MTRCL advised that it intended to **localize technology** and industrialize R&D outcomes **through industry-academia-research collaboration**. For industrial applications, MTRCL **would partner with leading enterprises in neighbouring cities, the Greater Bay Area and the Mainland** to facilitate mass production, thereby **promoting the development of "new quality productive forces"**.

Manpower resources for railway services

78. At the meeting on 6 December 2024, the Subcommittee received a briefing from MTRCL on the manpower resources and planning for railway services.

Improving the staff remuneration and benefits system

79. Members were concerned about **the relatively high voluntary turnover rate** of MTRCL staff in recent years and **the persistent shortage of maintenance staff**. Members suggested that MTRCL should **improve its staff remuneration and benefits system** (including studying the feasibility of implementing a five-day work week for frontline staff) to **retain experienced staff** and thereby enhance the passing on of experience. They also suggested that MTRCL should strengthen **the monitoring of the quality of outsourced works**, for example, by arranging an appropriate ratio of MTRCL supervisory staff to monitor the supervisory staff of contractors, and **minimize outsourcing arrangements as far as possible**.

80. According to MTRCL, as at December 2024, the voluntary staff turnover rate was 6.5%, which was an improvement from 7.2% in 2023. In addition, MTRCL increased the establishment of maintenance staff by several hundred following the asset management review. With this increase in the base figure, there was a net increase of over 200 maintenance staff members in 2024, resulting in a vacancy rate similar to that of the previous year. Furthermore, **the vacancy rate for term workers was also decreasing**.

81. MTRCL clarified that outsourcing only involved work processes which were not critical to railway, so that permanent staff could focus on critical railway work. **MTRCL currently had a staff size of around 17 000, of which approximately 12 000 were directly employed by the company**. **Term workers, who were not recruited by MTRCL, accounted for about 10% of the total number of staff**, while contract and outsourced staff responsible for maintenance made up around 30% of the company's entire workforce. MTRCL had set out the requirements for outsourced work in the contracts and **rigorously monitored the work of outsourced personnel** to ensure that the quality of works would not be compromised due to outsourcing.

82. On improving staff remuneration and benefits, MTRCL advised that **leave entitlements** of its staff **included maternity leave that was more favourable than statutory requirements**. Currently, MTRCL offered 16-week maternity leave, 10-day paternity leave, as well as well-being leave and 10-week adoption leave. The company also provided new recruits with bonuses and a "1+1 Octopus Card" free travel benefit while **offering numerous other benefits to long-serving staff**.

83. MTRCL advised that it would continue to make reference to the remuneration packages offered in the market. As regards the annual salary review, MTRCL had set up its own mechanism, including engaging an **independent organization to conduct a pay trend survey** with reference to a basket of private organizations and similar industry bodies.

Outsourcing of customer service centre operations

84. Some members expressed concerns that MTRCL's plan to outsource **customer service centre operations for four railway lines** would compromise service quality and undermine staff morale. These members requested that MTRCL undertake to **avoid redundancies** or transfers of staff from their original stations **as a result** of the outsourcing. Members also raised **concerns about whether the outsourcing arrangement would be extended to other job categories**.

85. MTRCL confirmed that it **had no current plans to expand the scope of outsourcing**. It also explained that there had been **thorough communication with staff representatives and undertook that redundancies or transfers of affected staff from their current stations would not take place**. Some members requested that MTRCL undertake not to employ imported workers for outsourced customer service centre operations. As regards tenderers' intentions to employ imported or local workers for outsourcing contracts, MTRCL indicated that this factor would be considered when evaluating tender submissions for outsourcing contracts.

Coping measures of the railway system during extreme weather conditions

86. At the meeting on 2 February 2024, the Subcommittee received a briefing from the Administration and MTRCL on the **coping measures** of the railway system **during extreme weather conditions**, as well as the work of MTRCL in handling rainstorms and typhoons.

87. Members **expressed their gratitude towards MTR staff who diligently carried emergency repairs under extreme weather conditions**. As regards MTRCL's measures to cope with extreme rainstorms and the associated flooding risks, members suggested that MTRCL should **install water level sensors**, motorized floodgates and water pumps at entrances/exits at higher risk of flooding. They also suggested **deploying additional staff to monitor** the situation of these stations after the issuance of the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal by the Hong Kong Observatory ("HKO").

88. MTRCL advised that it **had identified 42 entrances/exits across 26 MTR stations at higher flooding risk**; and that in the future, upon HKO's issuance of the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal, it would arrange staff to enhance monitoring of those entrances/exits, and **deploy flood boards or close flood doors** when necessary. MTRCL had been progressively installing water level sensors at those entrances/exits, and procured portable diesel-driven water pumps to handle serious flooding. MTRCL would consider formulating more specific **working guidelines for carrying out repairs during flooding** and would **provide additional equipment for its staff** to ensure their safety when handling emergency situations.

89. MTRCL advised that **upon learning of HKO's issuance of Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 9 in the future, it would make announcements to passengers** and provide more targeted information, such as the stations where certain train services would be suspended, so that passengers could switch to other railway lines or modes of transport.

MTR Corporation Limited's green and low carbon initiatives

90. At the meeting on 5 July 2024, the Administration briefed the Subcommittee on MTRCL's work in promoting green and low-carbon initiatives. Members expressed their support for the MTRCL's commitment to green operations and the implementation of environmental protection and energy-saving measures.

Environmental protection and energy-saving measures

91. Members noted that MTRCL proposed an **annual reduction of 2.5% in depot water consumption** in its 2023 Sustainability Report. Water used for cleaning trains at depots would be recycled for another round of train washing or as flushing water in depots. In addition, flow controllers had been installed on water taps in depots to **reduce water usage and enhance efficiency**. MTRCL was also exploring the introduction of robots to further improve water efficiency in cleaning operations.

92. Members noted that as a low-carbon transport operator, MTRCL **accounted for only 3.4% of the total energy consumption of the transport sector**. [25] They urged MTRCL to continue collaborating with local research institutions to explore ways of leveraging technology to drive further green initiatives.

Electric buses and electric vehicle charging stations

93. As regards MTRCL's plan to introduce at least 30 electric buses by the end of 2026, members considered the progress slow. They also suggested **installing electric vehicle ("EV") charging facilities at all MTRCL properties** to facilitate public use. In response, MTRCL stated that it would **progressively replace traditional diesel buses with electric buses** as the fleet reached the end of its service life and required replacement. Furthermore, MTRCL had installed an additional 127 EV charging stations at office buildings, shopping centres, and station car parks by the end of 2023. The target was to install a further 200 EV charging stations by 2025. MTRCL would review this target from time to time and explore potential areas for improvement.

Utilizing new energy

94. Members noted that MTRCL has rented low-floor, hydrogen-fuelled light rail vehicles ("LRVs") and **built a low-floor platform near Kin On Stop in Tuen Mun for study purposes**. Research and **testing on hydrogen-fuelled LRVs would be conducted** on a non-passenger basis. Members opined that the adoption of new energy sources was an inevitable trend and **urged MTRCL to commence the study as soon as possible**. However, some members expressed concerns about the safety of using hydrogen energy in railways. Other members pointed out that the current Light Rail system used high-floor trains, whereas the testing involved low-

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[25] MTRCL provided supplementary information on how the relevant figures were estimated, including the ratio of energy generated by the train's regenerative energy system to its total energy consumption (LC Paper No. CB(3)694/2024(01)).

floor trains. Consequently, it was suggested that MTRCL investigate the feasibility of converting existing trains to enable a future switch to hydrogen fuel for the rolling stock.

95. MTRCL responded that **the application of hydrogen energy in rail transport was still in its infancy**. They hoped that the study could **collect more data and experience** to improve understanding of hydrogen energy performance in complex road environments, and to work out the proper handling of hydrogen supply, storage and transportation. MTRCL **expected to conduct related research during non-traffic hours in 2024**. As regards the suggestion of converting trains, MTRCL had no immediate plans to convert those currently in use, given their recent purchase and the technical feasibility and cost-effectiveness considerations.

Air-conditioning systems and recycling facilities

96. As regards MTRCL's **phased chiller replacement project**, some members expressed concern about the slightly higher temperatures on MTR platforms and inside train compartments during crowded periods. They asked whether energy conservation factors were considered when regulating station temperatures. Other members were of the view that **the lack of air-conditioning facilities on Light Rail platforms** on hot summer days **needed to be addressed**.

97. According to MTRCL, **temperature standards for stations were set out in the Operating Agreement signed with the Government**. MTRCL regularly measured temperatures at stations, on platforms and in train compartments to ensure compliance with these standards. Where temperatures exceeded acceptable levels, additional air coolers were installed to improve air circulation. MTRCL explained that as Light Rail platforms were located outdoors, environmental constraints prevented the installation of air conditioning systems. However, **additional fans and air coolers had been installed on these platforms to improve the waiting environment**.

98. Members enquired about the effectiveness of the first "GREEN@COMMUNITY" recycling store at Tsing Yi Station, and suggested setting up more recycling facilities at other stations to promote environmental protection. In response, MTRCL reported that **as at May 2024, the recycling store had collected 26 tonnes of recyclable materials, which was encouraging**. MTRCL **would continue to identify suitable locations at stations for setting up more recycling facilities** for public convenience.

Latest progress on enhancing MTR facilities and passenger experience

99. At the meetings on 5 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, respectively, the Subcommittee received briefings from MTRCL regarding the latest progress on **enhancing station facilities and passenger experience**. **Members generally acknowledged MTRCL's efforts in these areas** and offered views on ways to further optimize facilities at individual stations and passenger services.

MTR facilities

100. Members noted with satisfaction that **the retrofitting of Automatic Platform Gates ("APGs") at EAL stations was smoothly completed in early June 2025**. Although the works at some platforms were relatively complex, with MTRCL's efforts to expedite the progress, the entire project was ultimately completed about six months ahead of the original schedule (i.e. within 2025).

101. Some members pointed out that **there were not enough ticket gates at certain exits/entrances of Yuen Long Station**. For example, there was only one bi-directional gate at Exit E. MTRCL responded that it **planned to install additional ticket gates at Yuen Long Station exits/entrances and would endeavour to complete the works as soon as possible**.

102. Members noted that currently, **over 60% of stations on the MTR network (including all interchange stations) had passenger toilets**, seven of which were smart toilets. They enquired about MTRCL's timetable for providing and renovating toilets at the remaining stations and whether all toilets would be converted to smart toilets in order to address the issue of poor cleanliness.

103. In response, MTRCL explained that **due to technical constraints, it was not feasible to provide passenger toilets at the remaining 33 stations**. However, passengers with urgent needs might contact station staff to **arrange use of toilets in MTR offices**. There were also ongoing toilet renovation works, the most recent example being at Siu Hong Station on the Tuen Ma Line.

104. Members expressed concern about the i**nsufficient train frequency and the narrow platform area on SIL**, which had resulted in long queues of passengers. They suggested increasing train frequency during peak hours to reduce waiting times. In response, MTRCL advised that it was reviewing staffing levels and **exploring the possibility of adjusting train frequencies on SIL**. MTRCL was also **in discussions** with relevant government departments about **allowing staff without train operator qualifications to**

perform duties on trains, thereby enhancing flexibility in staff deployment and train service arrangements.

China T-Union Card[26]

105. Members expressed concern about the limitations of using the China T-Union Cards ("T-Union Cards") on the MTR network, especially the **inability to top up with Renminbi** and their **restricted applicability across the entire MTR network and its associated transport services**, including the Airport Express, Light Rail, MTR buses, MTR feeder buses and first-class compartments on ERL. MTRCL responded that passengers were currently unable to top up their T-Union Cards with Renminbi in Hong Kong, which was consistent with the inability to do so with Hong Kong dollars in the mainland. According to MTRCL, **T-Union Cards could meet passenger needs and that the company would continue to monitor their usage and explore the possibility of expanding their applicability** to more transport services within the MTR network **based on passenger demand**.

Fare issues for interchange between Tsim Sha Tsui station and East Tsim Sha Tsui station

106. Some members pointed out that **passengers using single-journey tickets were charged for two separate journeys** when interchanging between Tsim Sha Tsui Station and East Tsim Sha Tsui Station, **resulting in extra fares and disputes**. Members asked whether the new ticketing system had resolved this issue. In response, MTRCL undertook to review the relevant situation.

Recommendations

107. During the deliberations, members of the Subcommittee put forward the following recommendations for the Administration/MTRCL to consider:

(a) given the importance of NOL (which would become the public transportation backbone of the Northern Metropolis), the Administration should leverage innovative technologies in conjunction with policy measures to **expedite the construction progress of the NOL project**, and anticipate **connection with** the planned **CRL** in its design to enhance synergy(see paragraphs 12-13 above);

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[26] Starting from 22 March 2025, the China T-Union Card was accepted as a payment method for fares on the heavy rail network at MTR ticket gates.

(b) regarding the site selection of the co-location boundary control facilities for **HSWRL**, the HKSAR Government should **seek** from the Central Government **the setting up of checkpoints at both Shenzhen Bay and Qianhai Stations** to enhance the overall cost-effectiveness of the project. Members also suggested that the Administration should **allow flexibility in the design** of the proposed project's interchange stations, signalling systems, etc., for better connection/extension in the future if necessary (see paragraphs 14-15 above)

(c) for **SGMTS-KT**, consideration should be given to extending the project to Kwun Tong or Yau Tong MTR stations, and building a connecting bridge across the Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter to **extend the alignment of the system to Cha Kwo Ling and Yau Tong**, so as to enhance overall transport efficiency; and to implementing special arrangements on days when major events or concerts are held at the Kai Tak Sports Park, **with the adoption of a "one long-haul followed by three short-haul" train service pattern to divert passenger flow** (see paragraphs 23-24 above);

(d) for **SGMTS-HSK/HT**, commissioning should be achieved before 2030 to tie in with the simultaneous commissioning of the Hung Shui Kiu Station on TML, and consideration should be given to **extending the project alignment to further north of Tin Shui Wai** (see paragraph 25 above);

(e) for **SGMTS for SIL(W)**, more public consultation should be conducted before finalizing the detailed design, the project's connectivity with housing estates and the existing railway system should be enhanced, and early completion should be pursued to **tie in with the population intake timetable under the redevelopment plan of Wah Fu Estate** (see paragraphs 26-28 above);

(f) for **WKS**, discussions should be held with the relevant Mainland authorities on the arrangements for providing **catering services and shops** in **the waiting concourse located within MPA**, and ways should be explored to **reduce the number of times passengers are required to present documents and tickets** within WKS, so as to provide convenience to passengers (see paragraphs 30 and 34 above);

(g) the Administration should leverage the convenience of XRL and Hong Kong's advantage as a regional aviation hub to **enhance air-rail intermodal transport services, simplify the cumbersome "exit and re-entry" procedures, and integrate the services between WKS and Airport Station**, so as to attract more Mainland passengers to use XRL to connect to flights (see paragraphs 32-33 above);

(h) the number of **directly connected destinations** for the XRL Hong Kong Section and the sleeper train services **departing in the evenings and arriving the following mornings** should be increased, and the feasibility of **introducing the "Flexi-trip" Arrangement to more train services** should be explored (see paragraphs 35-38 above);

(i) for **the SIL(E), fully automatic operation should be implemented as soon as possible** to demonstrate the effectiveness of the new Enterprise Asset Management System in supporting smart transport, after becoming the first application example of the system in 2024 (see paragraph 59 above);

(j) **the progress of the signalling system upgrade programme should be more rigorously monitored** to ensure the completion of the signalling system upgrade for TWL in 2026 as scheduled and the smooth completion of the upgrade works for all urban railway lines, so as to enhance the reliability and efficiency of railway services (see paragraph 63 above).;

(k) MTRCL should **formulate contingency plans for railway incidents occurring during peak service demand periods** and review how to strengthen the coordination of emergency responses among public transport operators in the event of unexpected incidents, with a view to making prompt arrangements after incidents to help minimize the impact on the public (see paragraphs 64-66 above);

(l) consideration should be given to **reviewing the existing SPR arrangement** by changing it so that for every hour after the incident during which service has not fully resumed, a fine of $1 million would be imposed, and by including the number of passengers affected by the incident as a penalty criterion (see paragraphs 67-71 above);

(m) for MTRCL's staff **remuneration and benefits system**, continuous improvement should be made to retain experienced staff and thereby enhance the passing on of experience, while the quality of outsourced works should be more rigorously monitored and **outsourcing arrangements should be minimized** as far as possible (see paragraphs 78-82 above); and

(n) MTRCL should continue to explore ways of leveraging technology to drive further environmental initiatives and advance research into the **application of hydrogen energy within the Light Rail network** (see paragraphs 93-94 above).

Advice sought

108. The Subcommittee has completed its work in the Seventh LegCo. The Panel is invited to note the deliberations and recommendations of the Subcommittee.

Council Business Divisions
Legislative Council Secretariat
13 October 2025

Appendix 1

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Terms of Reference [Note 1]

To follow up on overall planning of railways [Note 2], and various issues relating to the planning and implementation of new railway projects, and the operation of existing railways as follows:

- implementation progress of "Railway Development Strategy 2014"
- overall planning and financing of new railway projects;
- environmental impact assessment of new railway projects;
- resumption of land arising from the implementation of new railway projects under the Railways Ordinance (Cap. 519);
- progress update on the implementation of new railway projects;
- provision of supporting public infrastructure for new railway projects;
- co-ordination of other public transport services consequent to the commissioning of new railway lines and related matters;
- performance of existing railway lines including train service performance and safety management;
- maintenance programme; and
- train service disruptions and breakdowns, and arrangements for handling emergency situations.

Note 1: Matters relating to corporate governance of the post-merger corporation and fares, including review of the fare adjustment mechanism, should be dealt with by the Panel on Transport.

Note 2: According to the Third Comprehensive Transport Study conducted in 1997, railways would form the backbone of the passenger transport system. Railway developments would thus have considerable impact on the overall community and people's livelihood. At the Transport Panel meeting on 20 November 2020, members expressed the view that the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways should not only follow up on the operation of individual railways, but should also focus on the overall planning of railway developments and time table of the implementation.

Appendix 2a

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Membership list for 2022 session

Chairman	Dr Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Deputy Chairman	Ir Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu
Members	Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing, MH Hon Dominic LEE Tsz-king Hon CHAU Siu-chung Hon Andrew LAM Siu-lo, SBS, JP Hon YIU Pak-leung, MH Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung, JP Hon CHAN Hok-fung, MH, JP Hon YANG Wing-kit Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP (Total: 18 members)
Clerk	Ms Sophie LAU
Legal Adviser	Miss Evelyn LEE

Appendix 2b

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Membership list for 2023 session*

Chairman	Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Deputy Chairman	Ir Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu
Members	Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBM, GBS, JP Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Dr Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing, MH Hon Dominic LEE Tsz-king Hon CHAU Siu-chung Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung, JP Hon CHAN Hok-fung, MH, JP Hon YANG Wing-kit Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP (Total: 17 members)
Clerk	Ms Sophie LAU
Legal Adviser	Miss Evelyn LEE

* Changes in membership are shown in Annex to Appendix 2b.

Annex to Appendix 2b

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Changes in membership

Member	**Relevant date**
Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP	Since 23 May 2023

Appendix 2c

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Membership list for 2024 session

Chairman	Ir Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu
Deputy Chairman	Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung, JP
Members	Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, GBS, JP Dr Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing, MH, JP Hon CHAU Siu-chung Hon LEUNG Man-kwong, MH Hon CHAN Hok-fung, MH, JP Hon YANG Wing-kit (Total: 14 members)
Clerk	Ms Joanne MAK
Legal Adviser	Ms Dorothy YUNG

Appendix 2d

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Membership list for 2025 session *

Chairman	Ir Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu
Deputy Chairman	Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung, BBS, JP
Members	Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, GBS, JP Dr Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing, MH, JP Hon CHAU Siu-chung Hon LEUNG Man-kwong, MH Hon CHAN Hok-fung, MH, JP (Total: 12 members)
Clerk	Ms Joanne MAK
Legal Adviser	Ms Dorothy YUNG

* Changes in membership are shown in Annex to Appendix 2d.

Annex to Appendix 2d

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Changes in membership

Member	**Relevant date**
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP	Since 7 January 2025
Hon YANG Wing-kit	Since 7 January 2025