

(Translation)

Islands District Council

Minutes of Meeting of Traffic and Transport Committee

Date : 19 July 2021 (Monday)
Time : 10:30 a.m.
Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room,
14/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present

Chairman

Mr KWOK Ping, Eric

Vice-Chairman

Mr HO Siu-kei

Members

Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP
Mr WONG Man-hon, MH (Arrived at around 10:50 a.m.)
Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH
Mr CHAN Lin-wai, MH (Left at around 12:15 p.m.)
Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken (Arrived at around 10:45 a.m.)
Mr HO Chun-fai (Arrived at around 10:45 a.m.)
Ms WONG Chau-ping (Arrived at around 10:35 a.m.)
Ms TSANG Sau-ho, Josephine
Mr TSUI Sang-hung, Sammy (Arrived at around 10:40 a.m.)
Mr FONG Lung-fei
Ms LAU Shun-ting

Attendance by Invitation

Mr TSANG Wai-man	Administrative Assistant/Lands, District Lands Office/Islands
Ms Penny CHUNG	Assistant Public Affairs Manager, Citybus Limited
Mr Stephen WAN	Manager (Operations), Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Desmond TANG	Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Sunny LAU	Operations Officer, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Ms Rennis LIP	Senior Officer (Public Affairs), Long Win Bus Company Limited
Ms NGAN Yee-ling	Community Development Manager, The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong)
Ms WONG Ka-yee	Research and Development Officer, The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong)

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas	Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Ms KANG Pu	District Engineer/General (2)B, Highways Department
Ms WONG Wing-ying, Chloe	Engineer/22 (L), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Ms LEUNG Ka-man, Eunice	Senior Transport Officer/Islands1, Transport Department
Mr YEUNG Chun-wing, Jun	Senior Transport Officer/Islands2, Transport Department
Ms HUI Shuk-yee	Engineer/Islands2, Transport Department
Mr HO Lee-yip	Manager, District Relations, New Lantau Bus (1973) Company Limited
Ms CHAU Shuk-man, Anthea	Senior Corporate Communications Manager, Sun Ferry Services Company Limited
Ms LAM Wai-ling	General Manager, Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Holdings Limited

Secretary

Ms CHAN Hoi-ching, Mandy	Executive Officer (District Council)3, Islands District Office
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Absent

Mr WONG Chun-yeung

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Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed representatives of government departments and organisations as well as Members to the meeting and introduced the following representatives of departments and organisations who attended the meeting:

- (a) Ms CHAU Shuk-man, Anthea, Senior Corporate Communications Manager of Sun Ferry Services Company Limited, who stood in for Ms Sonja CHAN.

I. Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting held on 17 May 2021

- 2. The Chairman said that the above minutes had incorporated the amendments proposed by government departments, guests and Members and had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.
- 3. The captioned minutes were confirmed unanimously by a show of hands.

(The confirmation was supported by the Chairman Mr Eric KWOK, the Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei, Mr Randy YU, Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, Mr CHAN Lin-wai, Ms Josephine TSANG, Mr FONG Lung-fei and Ms LAU Shun-ting.)

(Ms WONG Chau-ping arrived at around 10:35 a.m.; Mr Sammy TSUI arrived at around 10:40 a.m.; Mr Ken WONG and Mr HO Chun-fai arrived at around 10:45 a.m.)

II. Question on service quality of Long Win route no. E31
(Paper T&TC 30/2021)

4. The Chairman welcomed Ms LEUNG Ka-man, Eunice, Senior Transport Officer/Islands1 of the Transport Department (TD), as well as Mr Stephen WAN, Manager (Operations), Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development and Ms Rennis LIP, Senior Officer (Public Affairs) of Long Win Bus Company Limited (Long Win) to the meeting to respond to Members' questions. The written replies prepared by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and Long Win had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

5. The Chairman briefly introduced the question and expressed his views as follows:

- (a) A large-scale questionnaire survey was conducted by his office in early July this year to gather Tung Chung residents' views on the service quality of Long Win bus route no. E31. The results had been forwarded to Long Win and the TD for their reference.
- (b) He was dissatisfied that the EPD had not responded directly to whether the CO₂ concentration in compartments of Long Win buses had been measured and had not provided the relevant figures of the past two years. He asked the Secretariat to write to the EPD for a written reply. According to the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), an indoor CO₂ concentration of 700 ppm would already cause fatigue, and a concentration above 1 000 ppm would have an impact on people's respiratory and circulatory systems. It was unacceptable for the EPD to suggest that only CO₂ concentration exceeding 3 500 ppm in bus compartments would be problematic, when such concentration was measured to reach 2 174 ppm. He hoped that the EPD and Long Win would seriously tackle the problem of excessive CO₂ concentration in bus compartments.

6. Mr Stephan WAN gave a response as follows:

- (a) There was a service disruption to bus route E31 on 2 June this year due to the unexpected absence of the bus driver. Long Win had adjusted the trips to reduce the impact on passengers.

- (b) Long Win had reviewed the recent situation since June this year, and the service quality of bus route E31 had already improved. In addition to reviewing the bus trip frequency, Long Win recognised passengers' demand for more comfortable journeys. Currently, the average occupancy rate during rush hours stood at 70% while some individual trips were more packed. Long Win would review the situation in question.
- (c) Long Win had earlier implemented a new boarding arrangement for passengers at Mun Tung Estate to ensure buses could pull in more smoothly. The Company would also look at specific bus stops with a longer queuing time, in a hope that Members would understand that certain routes had more stops, and Long Win would review with the TD how to make buses pull in more smoothly.

7. Ms Eunice LEUNG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) She thanked the Chairman for providing the detailed survey results. The Department would explore improvement measures with Long Win. During weekdays, route E31 ran every 12 to 20 minutes heading to Tsuen Wan and every 15 to 25 minutes heading to Tung Chung, while during the weekend and public holidays, it ran every 20 to 25 minutes. According to the Department's recent survey and the information provided by Long Win, the occupancy rate of route E31 during the busiest hour was approximately 60% to 70%. According to the current guidelines on increasing bus frequencies, the Department would consider increasing the frequency of a particular route with the bus company if the occupancy rate during the busiest hour reached 75% at rush hours or 60% outside rush hours. The Department would continue to conduct field surveys on the relevant route during weekdays and holidays and request Long Win to make service improvement in accordance with the guidelines.
- (b) On the issue of lost trips, the lost trip rates of route E31 remained below 1.5% in the first two quarters, but the Department noted that lost trips were reported in specific hours on certain dates. The Department had approached Long Win on the situation and had requested it to make improvements. Long Win had responded that it would pay more attention to the issue. The Department would communicate with Long Win to achieve continuous improvement on how buses pulled in at stops as well as their arrival time.

8. Mr FONG Lung-fei expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He often received complaints from residents about the inadequate air conditioning on buses of route E31. The air conditioning was weak despite an occupancy rate ranging from 40% to 50%. He had taken

the bus himself and found it hot and stuffy as well due to inadequate air conditioning.

- (b) Under the novel design of the new buses to be purchased by Long Win, passengers on the lower deck would be able to open the windows. He was worried that passengers on the upper deck might be affected by the opened windows during muggy days and when air conditioning was inadequate. He urged Long Win to examine the matter more thoroughly.

9. Ms Rennis LIP gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Long Win paid close attention to the air quality in bus compartments, complied with the professional guidelines set forth by the EPD in relation to the management of air quality in air-conditioned buses, and conducted routine random inspections to monitor air quality in bus compartments. Results from recent inspections indicated that CO₂ concentration in bus compartments of route E31 met the Department's standards, being lower than level 1 of the Department's standards most of the time, and occasionally reaching level 2 or below during rush hours without going over 3 500 ppm. Long Win would continue to monitor the relevant situation. Moreover, the buses' air conditioning systems were equipped with a fresh air function to draw in fresh air from outside the bus for filtering and purification.
- (b) As a standard feature of the new buses purchased by Long Win, both upper and lower decks are equipped with horizontal sliding windows, which could be opened to improve air circulation when necessary.

10. The Chairman expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He stressed that according to the information of the ASHRAE, an indoor CO₂ concentration above 1 000 ppm would have an impact on people's respiratory and circulatory systems, and yet Long Win replied that the upper limit set by the EPD was 3 500 ppm. Moreover, Hong Kong's hot and humid weather might have an impact on chronically ill passengers. He was uncertain about how frequently Long Win cleaned its filtration systems, but if the frequency was too low, it would be of no effect. Apart from route E31, bus compartments of route E32A were just as stuffy, and he had already reported the problem to the bus captain.
- (b) He thanked Long Win for strengthening manpower and increasing the number of trips, and he hoped that the company would follow up on the arrangement of reserve buses.

- (c) According to the results of his survey, the occupancy rate of E31 buses already reached 60% to 70% when they left Yat Tung Estate, and many passengers were unable to board the full buses at Mun Tung Estate. He asked whether an additional special trip could be arranged between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. to meet passenger demand.

11. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Department would examine the number of passengers on E31 buses during weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. and the boarding of passengers at the Mun Tung Estate bus stop, as well as discussing improvement measures with Long Win.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat of the Islands District Council (IDC) had written to the EPD to channel Members' views.)

(Mr WONG Man-hon arrived at around 10:50 a.m.)

III. Question on improving bus service of routes 37M, E21A and E32A operating in Tung Chung North
(Paper T&TC 35/2021)

12. The Chairman welcomed Ms LEUNG Ka-man, Eunice, Senior Transport Officer/Islands1 of the TD, Mr HO Lee-yip, Manager, District Relations of New Lantau Bus (1973) Company Limited (NLB), Ms Penny CHUNG, Assistant Public Affairs Manager of Citybus Limited (Citybus) and Mr Stephen WAN, Manager (Operations), Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, Mr Sunny LAU, Operations Officer and Ms Rennis LIP, Senior Officer (Public Affairs) of Long Win to the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

13. Mr Sammy TSUI briefly introduced the question.

14. Ms Eunice LEUNG gave a response as follows:

- (a) On the issue of lost trips, the Department would monitor the stability and level of bus services through various means, such as examining the operating returns submitted by bus companies, conducting regular surveys and handling passengers' complaints or suggestions. It would also explore with bus companies whether the causes of lost trips were within their control and urge them to take appropriate measures to address other external factors. Under the current mechanism, should a bus company be unable to provide service in accordance with the requirements, TD officials of different levels would first issue a warning letter. If there was no improvement, the Executive Council would hear representations from the Government and the bus company. There would be penalties if the case was substantiated. For bus companies, such mechanism was a rigorous and fair procedure. As existing penalties included revoking a bus company's right to operate a

route or its entire right of operations, the Department believed there was sufficient deterrent effect.

- (b) The operating records of NLB route 37M showed no lost trip. In its reply to the Department, the bus company said that after a bus left the terminus, passengers getting on and off at bus stops along the route would affect the timeliness of arrivals. The Department already reminded NLB of the need to monitor its bus frequencies and provide stable service in accordance with the demand of passengers.
- (c) The lost trip rates for Long Win bus route E32A in the first and second quarters were below 0.5%, which was considered reasonable. The Department would continue to closely monitor the route.
- (d) Citybus responded to the Department that route E21A had departed from the Oi Man Estate Bus Terminus on time at 9:20 p.m. on 18 June this year. The bus was caught in traffic congestion in Mong Kok and did not arrive at the Tung Choi Street bus stop until 9:58 p.m. The Department had advised Citybus to pay attention to its service frequencies and adjust bus trips flexibly in the event of severe traffic congestion.

15. Mr HO Lee-yip gave a response as follows:

- (a) Bus 37M departed from Ying Tung Estate and passed through several traffic light junctions along the way. As there were a significant number of passengers getting on and off, and all buses had to queue before pulling in at the cable car terminal, the arrival time at the Tung Chung terminus could vary by one to two minutes.
- (b) As bus 37M could carry 120 passengers at a time, a single bus would be enough to meet passenger demand. When face-to-face classes in school were resumed, the situation where a significant number of passengers failed to board the bus would not happen. NLB could conduct on-site inspections with Members at the terminus if necessary.

16. Ms Penny CHUNG said that according to the records of 18 June this year, route E21A had departed on time from Oi Man Estate at the time concerned but its arrival time had been affected by the traffic congestion on Argyle Street. Citybus had followed up on and dealt with the attitude of the bus captain in an appropriate manner and would continue to closely monitor the service attitude of bus captains.

17. Mr Stephan WAN said Long Win had all along paid close attention to the service level and frequency of route E32A. Some bus trips on 2 and 3 June this year were delayed due to the breakdowns of buses, and the company had already reminded maintenance and repair staff to pay extra attention to avoid disruption to passengers.

The situation had improved recently, and Long Win would continue to closely monitor it.

18. Mr FONG Lung-fei expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He received a complaint from a resident in early June this year, stating that when he arrived at the Ho Man Tin bus stop at 7:45 p.m. to catch the E21A bus departing at 7:50 p.m., he saw the bus captain walked back and forth in the compartment once and drove away without carrying any passengers. The passenger called the complaint hotline 1823, only to be told that the bus had to proceed to the next stop as soon as possible to pick up passengers due to trip delay. He could not understand why the captain departed without letting passengers at the terminus get on board first.
- (b) He often took bus E21A to get to the Mong Kok Flower Market, and would walk from the bus stop at the Mong Kok Police Station to the Prince Edward bus stop to catch the bus. He did not see any E21A buses going past along the way and said his walking and waiting time often added up to 25 to 30 minutes. The frequency of route E21A was therefore far lower than once every 20 minutes as stated officially. He hoped that Citybus would pay more attention to that.

19. Mr Sammy TSUI expressed his views as follows:

- (a) As TD's penalty mechanism applied only to serious incidents, it was unable to monitor and eliminate the issue of lost trips which affected the general public. Trip delays and inaccurate arrival times on mobile apps might appear inconsequential to the management and the Department, but what passengers wanted most after work was to head home as early as possible. The Department and bus companies should have anticipated the eventualities such as water main breaks and traffic congestion during route planning, instead of passing the buck afterwards.
- (b) With the ubiquity of mobile apps and the displaying of bus arrival times on display panels at bus stops, bus companies should consider leveraging such technology to inform passengers of the incidents that affected the schedule because most passengers were accustomed to checking the bus companies' mobile apps before taking a bus. Bus companies and the Department were responsible for improving the accuracy of the information posted on the apps. As the tolls of Lantau Link had been waived, bus companies should make good use of their resources to enhance their information technology systems so as to provide passengers with accurate and real-time traffic and arrival information. With the epidemic subsiding for the time being, people

were largely going to school and work at normal hours, so bus frequencies should match their commuting needs.

- (c) According to his own survey and feedback from residents, trip delays of route 37M occurred primarily from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Residents told him that NLB route 39M buses were often seen waiting at the terminus next to their bus stop. From what he observed, bus captains of route 39M would let passengers board on the bus first and then waited for two to three minutes before departing. The buses arrived at the bus stop early, making an impression to people that the bus frequency was high. He recommended that route 37M could follow the practice of route 39M.
- (d) The buses serving route E32A were older, and there were problems such as breakdowns and cockroaches. He hoped that the Department and the bus companies would pay attention to that and make improvements, particularly in respect of the mobile apps and application of technology.

20. Ms WONG Chau-ping asked the Chairman whether it would be more appropriate to discuss questions on bus routes at the Bus Routes Working Group, as the issue of bus routes often touched on a lot of details and required more time for discussion.

21. The Chairman said that the relevant issues needed to be raised at the Traffic and Transport Committee (T&TC) first. Ideally, the issues would be resolved at the meeting, otherwise Members could decide whether to follow it up at the Working Group.

22. Ms WONG Chau-ping said she hoped to handle the issue of bus routes in an appropriate and skilful manner. Given that the discussion of a bus route was not an easy task, it would be more appropriate to leave it to the Working Group for the handling of it.

23. Mr Randy YU agreed with Ms WONG Chau-ping, stating that the establishment of the Bus Routes Working Group was proposed because many Members were concerned about the issue of bus routes. Almost one-third or a half of the T&TC agenda were related to bus routes, and the matters discussed were quite specific, such as lost trips, routes, the addition of bus stops and the air quality of bus compartments, etc. The Chairman had the right to put the issue to discussion at the T&TC, but Members' initial decision was to discuss such issues in greater detail and depth at the Working Group. Given that half of the Members at the T&TC might not be familiar with various bus routes, it would be more efficient to first discuss the issues at the Working Group before reporting them to the T&TC. Besides, the Working Group placed no limits on the number of times and duration of Members' speeches. He suggested that the Chairman should make reference to his opinion

above, while acknowledging that the Chairman had the final discretion on the agenda arrangement.

24. The Chairman said he normally respected Members' rights to submit an issue and express their views. He also agreed with what Mr Randy YU had said, but the agenda item would only be discussed at the Working Group when the issue still needed to be followed up, subject to Members' consent. The procedures were to raise the issue at the T&TC first before it could be followed up at the Working Group. It would be procedurally improper for the Working Group to raise issues that had never been discussed.

25. Mr Sammy TSUI said it was more effective to discuss bus routes at the T&TC as representatives of departments and organisations were all present, and the staff of the TD and bus companies did not need to make time for another meeting. Besides, discussion of bus route problems could be completed in a single meeting unless the issues were so complex that a consensus could not be reached easily and required further follow-up actions. The circumstances of the IDC was special. Some Members were concerned about bus routes while others were concerned about ferry services. When individual Members discussed matters unrelated to other Member's constituencies, it did not mean that other Members could be absent from the meeting.

26. Ms WONG Chau-ping said everyone was pleased to discuss bus routes as it was a livelihood issue. Members also had the understanding that the numbers and ranks of the guests invited to attend the Working Group were no different from those invited to the T&TC. The meetings were equally effective, so bus routes should be mainly addressed at the Working Group to give full play to its role.

27. The Chairman said he had reiterated the procedures, which stipulated that any issue to be discussed at the Working Group should be discussed at the T&TC first before being followed up at the Working Group, subject to Members' consent. Furthermore, no Member had violated the limit of three turns of speaking, and he had made reminders to Members on the second turn of their speaking. It was alright for Members to dedicate the entirety of their three turns to discussing issues they cared about, and no procedure was violated.

28. Ms WONG Chau-ping said she had the right to express her views and make suggestions, and the Chairman had the right to decide whether to adopt them. Everyone understood that Mr Sammy TSUI and Mr FONG Lung-fei made a lot of efforts in their field surveys, which was why she suggested improvements to the meeting.

29. Mr HO Siu-kei said even residents at rural areas needed to take the bus to get to the urban areas. He agreed with what Mr Sammy TSUI said about improving the accuracy of the information released by bus companies via mobile apps to facilitate passengers. He hoped that Members would put together their effort to deal with the livelihood issues and discuss them in an objective manner.

30. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to explain the meeting procedures of the T&TC Bus Routes Working Group.

31. The Secretary said the terms of reference of the T&TC Bus Routes Working Group were to discuss and follow up on Members' questions on the routes, frequency, service hours, fares, interchange concessions and service quality of franchised buses as referred by the T&TC; and to make necessary referrals to relevant departments or organisations for follow-up.

32. Mr Ken WONG said the issues relating to bus routes were matters of concern to all. In addition to ferries, he also took buses. He understood the inconvenience caused by lost trips. He suggested dealing with the agenda of the day first before discussing the meeting procedures of the Committee and Working Group.

33. Mr HO Chun-fai said that the T&TC initially had lengthy agendas and the meetings were long, as Tung Chung had been a new town with a lot of bus routes still under development. The Bus Routes Working Group was established in view of the situation, and meetings had become gradually more efficient. Given the epidemic and the lengthy agendas, the Chairman should improve on the agenda arrangement.

34. Mr Randy YU said that in addition to the Members representing Tung Chung, he also cared about the bus routes in Tung Chung and chose to join the Bus Routes Working Group because residents of the four rural regions of Lantau Island would also travel to Tung Chung for bus interchange. On the agenda of the IDC meetings, he would normally advise Members to submit issues related to traffic and transport or environmental hygiene to the relevant committees. If such matters as health and epidemic were more urgent and Members did not want to leave them to the committees for discussion, he would approve the inclusion of the issues to the IDC. It was fine if Members considered that the bus route issues touched on today should be discussed at the Committee first and followed up at the Working Group if necessary. However, he remembered when all bus routes were discussed in the meeting in the previous year, including reports and plans on the relevant bus routes, the Chairman agreed the issue be discussed at the Working Group first before referring it to the IDC, so there was flexibility with the arrangement. Owing to their respect for the Council, Members suggested the division of tasks to enhance the DC's efficiency, and the Chairman's role was to determine the most appropriate meeting for a particular issue. He hoped that the IDC would continue to operate smoothly.

35. Mr CHAN Lin-wai agreed with Ms WONG Chau-ping's views, saying that she did not refuse to allow Mr Sammy TSUI to speak. As a Lantau Island resident, she took the bus too and there were many bus routes in her constituency as well. He observed that most items on the agenda of the day were related to bus routes, and given that a Working Group had been established, he hoped the Chairman would determine before the committee meeting which issues could be left to the Working Group for discussion.

36. The Chairman hoped Members would understand the procedures of the meeting. Any issue relating to bus routes or ferry service had to be fully discussed at the committee first, and each Member should be given three turns to speak. If the responses of departments were deemed inadequate, the issues could be referred to the Working Group for follow-up with Members' consent. Likewise, the annual bus route planning had to be discussed at the Committee before being followed up by the Working Group. He hoped Members would think about the procedural issue.

37. Mr Sammy TSUI said the agenda of the day was the same as in the past. As the Committee had previously deliberated on bus routes serving Mui Wo and South Lantau, etc., he hoped to clarify whether Members considered all bus route-related issues should be discussed at the Working Group henceforth, or should it be based on the length of the agenda. He said he had not spoken for more turns than it was allowed under the meeting rules. However, other Members had made more remarks on whether the item should be discussed at the Committee. To his understanding, an issue ought to be followed up at the Working Group when a consensus could not be reached at the Committee. Everyone wanted to solve the problem, and he had already followed up with the TD and the bus companies on the issue before submitting it to the T&TC. However, as the problem could not be resolved due to various reasons, he had to refer the matter to the T&TC. He hoped to gather Members' advice for the discussion so as to serve the residents. There were many bus routes on Lantau Island, all of which were relevant to different Members, so he hoped Members would deal with the matter fairly in the future.

38. Mr HO Chun-fai said the Chairman could determine whether to discuss an issue at the Working Group according to its urgency, and he was also responsible for assigning agenda items to different meetings.

39. Ms LAU Shun-ting urged Members to make good use of meeting time and proceed with the deliberations.

40. The Chairman hoped the arrangement for increasing the frequency of route E21A under the Bus Route Planning Programme 2021-2022 could be implemented as early as feasible, and he also hoped that the TD would enhance its monitoring work.

41. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Department would closely monitor the lost trips in the afore-mentioned routes and review plausible improvement measures.

IV Question on transport infrastructure of Yu Tai Court (Paper T&TC 34/2021)

42. The Chairman welcomed Ms LEUNG Ka-man, Eunice, Senior Transport Officer/Islands1 and Ms HUI Shuk-ye, Engineer/Islands 2 of the TD, Ms KANG Pu, District Engineer/General (2)B of the Highways Department (HyD), Mr Stephen WAN, Manager (Operations), Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, Mr Sunny LAU, Operations Officer and Ms Rennis LIP, Senior Officer

(Public Affairs) of Long Win, Ms Penny CHUNG, Assistant Public Affairs Manager of Citybus, and Mr HO Lee-yip, Manager, District Relations of NLB to the meeting to respond to Members' questions. The written replies prepared by the Housing Department, Long Win and Citybus had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

43. The Chairman briefly introduced the question.

44. Mr Desmond TANG said he had earlier conducted road testing with the TD and found that the turnaround at Pa Mei Road was unsuitable for double-decker buses to make U-turns. With the intake of residents in Yu Tai Court, Long Win would proactively follow up on the lost trips and the frequency of route E31, but there was no plan at this stage to re-route buses to Yu Tai Court. If there was a bus stop nearby, Long Win would be pleased to explore route improvements without disrupting passengers' journeys.

45. Ms HUI Shuk-ye said the Department had earlier proposed that the turnaround on Tung Chung Road near Pa Mei Road be widened to allow 12-metre buses to pass through, with a view to better addressing the commuting needs of Yu Tai Court residents and improving daily bus operations. The Department was informed by the HyD that the relevant works were expected to be completed by the end of July this year. In addition, the Department had no plans to widen the junction of Chung Yan Road and Tung Chung Road to allow 12.8-metre buses to pass through as it would require the removal of nearby footpaths and cycle tracks. However, the Department would continue to closely liaise with the relevant departments and, where necessary, explore with them the feasible proposals to facilitate the daily operation of buses. The Department was studying the need for bus bay at the Ma Wan New Village bus stop on Chung Yan Road northbound. It would explore the feasibility of the proposal with the relevant departments.

46. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Department would make arrangements so that NLB bus 37H would go through the turnaround after its widening to provide direct bus services to residents of Yu Tai Court. The Department was in active consultation with NLB to decide on the route and the sequence of the bus stops, and hoped to consult the IDC about the relevant proposal in the third quarter of this year. Currently, Yu Tai Court residents could use the footbridge at the entrance of the estate and the nearby elevator facilities to access the bus stop near the North Lantau Hospital on Chung Yan Road, where they could board various buses to head to different districts. As the extra time it took for buses to pass the turnaround behind Yu Tai Court might affect the residents of Mun Tung Estate and Yat Tung Estate, the Department would consider the proposal carefully pending further studies with the bus company.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat had forwarded the proposal on the amendment of bus route 37H to the T&TC Members for their comments on 20 September 2021.)

47. The Chairman asked whether the TD's arrangement would dovetail with the route of bus 37H at the end of this year.

48. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Department was in active discussion with NLB and hoped to consult the IDC about the proposal as early as practicable. If the progress was good, she expected the bus company would require several additional months to prepare the buses and train its bus captains, etc.

49. Mr HO Lee-yip said they would act in concert with the Department as far as practicable.

50. Mr Randy YU said the Committee had discussed the problems of NLB bus 34 heading to Tat Tung Road from Shek Mun Kap and NLB bus 36 heading to Siu Ho Wan from Tung Chung via Pak Mong before. As rural residents of Tung Chung, Mui Wo, Shek Mun Kap and Pak Mong often complained about the above-mentioned bus routes, the Committee suggested that the TD should study the merging of bus routes 34 and 36 with NLB, with the objectives of increasing bus patronage and frequency, meeting the commuting needs of new occupants of Yu Tai Court to travel between Tung Chung MTR Station and other areas in Tung Chung, as well as providing Shek Mun Kap, Siu Ho Wan and Pak Mong residents with better bus services. The Department stated it would study the relevant proposal. He thus asked what the study results were.

51. Ms WONG Chau-ping said ever since occupants moved into Yu Tai Court, the traffic around the turnaround, particularly the left-turn road section from the footbridge, was very congested during rush hours. Some villagers suggested that a bus stop be added opposite the footbridge to alleviate the problem, and she asked the TD to study the suggestion in detail. Moreover, the Department should also be mindful of the impact of the works in the vicinity of Yu Tai Court on the century-old "fung shui" banyan trees and other trees in the nearby villages. A consultation should be conducted in this respect. Also, she had repeatedly reported on the safety issues at the pedestrian crossing between the entrance of Yu Tai Court and Ma Wan New Village, and hoped the Department would swiftly follow up on the matter.

52. The Chairman said that they had indeed discussed the merging of routes 34 and 36 in the past, but NLB representatives explained at that time that the buses serving route 36 were 12 metres long, while only the small buses on route 34 could travel between Chek Lap Kok New Village and Shek Mun Kap. Due to constraints in resources, the route could not be operated entirely by small buses, and therefore the merging was not feasible.

53. Ms Eunice LEUNG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) In its Bus Route Planning Programme 2021-2022 for the Islands District, the Department had implemented the extension of route 36 to Disneyland, and therefore factors like overall bus frequency and distance covered had to be taken into account when reviewing the

merging of routes 34 and 36. The Department noted Members' concern about bus frequency and would pay more attention to it. The Department would request the NLB to increase the frequency if there was a demand from the residents of Pak Mong and Sunny Bay.

- (b) The Department would consider arranging for route 37H to stop at the bus stop on the northbound Chung Yan Road near Ma Wan New Village.

54. Ms HUI Shuk-yee said the Department would study the need for and the feasibility of building a bus bay on Chung Yan Road southbound near the footbridge with the relevant departments.

55. Mr Randy YU said the past proposal aimed to “kill three birds with one stone”, allowing residents of Yu Tai Court to benefit from appropriate traffic services when they moved in. He noted the extension of route 36 to Disneyland, but it would be in the interest of the bus company too if the bus routes could serve more areas. Moreover, he understood that the bus model on route 36 was unable to travel to the terminus of route 34 at Shek Mun Kap, but it was the TD's responsibility to study the widening of the turnaround at Shek Mun Kap to allow bigger buses to get through. Given that the Department's response on the transport infrastructure of Yu Tai Court was unclear, he put forward a proposal which he hoped the Department would study.

56. Mr WONG Man-hon said there were some demands for bus route 36 among residents of Pak Mong village, and he hoped route 36 would still be routed via the turnaround at Pak Mong after its extension to Disneyland.

57. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Member's proposal would be considered and hoped that more bus service could be provided to the residents of Yu Tai Court upon the completion of the turnaround works. As for route 36, buses would still be routed via the turnaround at Pak Mong to serve the residents there.

58. Mr HO Lee-yip said bus route 36 would go through Siu Ho Wan in every trip after its extension to Disneyland. Sectional fares would still be in place as before.

V. Question on request for resumption of direct bus service between Tung Chung North and Tsing Yi
(Paper T&TC 36/2021)

59. The Chairman welcomed Ms LEUNG Ka-man, Eunice, Senior Transport Officer/Islands1 of the TD, Mr Stephen WAN, Manager (Operations), Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, Mr Sunny LAU, Operations Officer and Ms Rennis LIP, Senior Officer (Public Affairs) of Long Win to the meeting to respond to Members' questions. The written replies prepared by Long Win had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

60. Mr Sammy TSUI briefly introduced the question.
61. Ms Eunice LEUNG gave a response as follows:
- (a) When planning the public transport network, the Department had to make efficient use of its resources in addition to providing the public with convenient ways to access various areas. Consequently, when considering whether to create a new bus route or rationalise existing routes, the Department would examine whether a particular area had enough ridership, other alternative transport services, the current service level and potential additional traffic load, etc. before recommending feasible routes.
 - (b) Currently, passengers from Tung Chung North might take E42P to Tsing Yi during rush hours in the morning, or take E32A to the Lantau Link Toll Plaza and interchange to E31, E32 or E42 to Tsing Yi. The existing arrangements could largely meet the commuting needs between Tung Chung North and Tsing Yi.
 - (c) The Department sought to understand passenger demand via different channels, including hearing Members' views and considering the complaints received by the Transport Complaints Unit and opinions sent in directly by the public. At the same time, the Department encouraged the public to make full use of the existing traffic services and interchange arrangement to enhance the operational efficiency of public transport services.
62. Mr Desmond TANG gave a response as follows:
- (a) Since February 2019, route E32A had switched to full day service, and route E31 no longer passed through Tung Chung North. It would be quicker for residents to travel to the urban areas from Tung Chung. Under the current bus-bus interchange schemes, passengers could interchange at Lantau Link Toll Plaza to E31 or E32 to get to Tsing Yi. Such arrangements not only shortened the journey time of route E31 but also enabled Tung Chung North residents to enjoy the convenience of heading directly to places like Tsuen Wan by taking bus E32A.
 - (b) Long Win had also considered the demand of Tsing Yi passengers and took the view that the current interchange arrangements could meet their commuting needs. Long Win had established interchange stops at strategic routes and tunnels according to the current traffic policies. It was observed that the results had been good with a high level of acceptance among passengers, delivering efficient use of resources and helping build a comprehensive network.

- (c) Since 20 June this year, buses heading to Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai had switched to using the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (TM-CLK Link). Long Win would review the second phase of the re-routing arrangement with the TD for improvement. Passengers going to the North District could take the E-series routes to Tsing Yi for interchange, as well as taking buses heading to Tuen Mun or Yuen Long and interchanging to E-series routes at Tuen Mun, Tin Shui Wai or Yuen Long. Many bus routes of Long Win plied between the North District and Tuen Mun, Tin Shui Wai or Yuen Long, making interchange a convenient option. Long Win also noted passengers' opinions on the newly-opened route E43 and would review the arrangements during the trial period. Long Win would like to thank Members for their views, which would be studied further to improve the route arrangement.

63. Mr Sammy TSUI expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He received many complaints from Tung Chung and Yuen Long residents that route E36A did not pass through Tai Lam Tunnel, so they were unable to interchange to other buses. Meanwhile, route E36A did not pass through Yuen Long town centre, which was inconvenient for passengers heading to the "Main Road" of Yuen Long. He asked if Long Win would address the above problems, such as allowing passengers to interchange to route E36 or E37. The TM-CLK Tunnel would be functionless if passengers needed to make multiple interchanges and could not shorten the journey.
- (b) Direct bus service to Tsing Yi would facilitate Tung Chung and Tung Chung North residents to go to work and school in Tsing Yi. Also, bus routes to Tsing Yi mainly went to Cheung Hang Estate, which was some distance away from Cheung On Estate. He asked if Long Win would consider routing its buses via Cheung On Estate. Meanwhile, as residents were still getting used to the new routes, he suggested that Long Win should explore providing other convenient options in addition to allowing passengers to interchange at Tsing Yi to the North District.
- (c) He suggested that Long Win should offer discounts to passengers interchanging to E-series routes because their journey time was lengthened. He hoped the Department and Long Win would review the matter.

64. Mr Desmond TANG gave a response as follows:

- (a) Since the opening of the TM-CLK Tunnel, certain routes like E34A and E34B had been replaced by the new routes E36 and E37, which were routed via the TM-CLK Tunnel. Moreover, Long Win had also

created the new route E34A which travelled from the area around Yat Tung Estate and Tung Chung North to Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun and vice versa, giving passengers from Tung Chung North and the surrounding areas a more direct route to head to the TM-CLK direction. It was an improvement over the lack of full-day direct bus service from Tung Chung North to Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai in the past. Apart from taking the direct route E36A, passengers could also interchange at the TM-CLK Interchange to other routes bound for various regions like Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai. Bus service coverage for Tung Chung North residents was thus enlarged.

- (b) Long Win paid close attention to the population growth in Tung Chung North and was aware of the many new developments to commence in Tung Chung North. The company would therefore review and make suitable adjustments to its bus services to meet the demand of residents. Long Win would continue to review with Members and the Department the arrangements for route E43 and other adjusted TM-CLK routes for the optimisation of bus services. In the future, it would also consider expanding the coverage of bus routes to Tsing Yi for interchanging passengers.

65. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Department noted the Member's concern about route E36A not passing through Castle Peak Road (Ping Shan and Yuen Long), while adding that there were changes to the interchange arrangements after buses travelling between Yuen Long and North Lantau Island switched to using the TM-CLK Tunnel. In the past, passengers of routes E34A and E34P had to interchange at the Lantau Link Toll Plaza to route E34B; now, Tung Chung passengers would take route E36A instead to the TM-CLK Interchange to interchange to route E36 bound for Castle Peak Road (Ping Shan and Yuen Long) and other destinations. The Department and Long Win would pay close attention to the demand of passengers travelling between Tung Chung North and Tsing Yi and explore improvement measures where necessary.

(Mr CHAN Lin-wai left at around 12:15 p.m.)

VI. Question on free motorcycle parking facilities in Yat Tung Estate
(Paper T&TC 31/2021)

66. The Chairman welcomed Ms HUI Shuk-yee, Engineer/Islands2 of the TD, Ms KANG Pu, District Engineer/General (2)B of the HyD and Mr TSANG Wai-man, Administrative Assistant/Lands of the District Lands Office/Islands (DLO) to the meeting to respond to Members' questions. The written replies prepared by the TD, the DLO and the Planning Department (PlanD) had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

67. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly introduced the question.

68. Mr TSANG Wai-man stated he had nothing to add to the written reply.
69. Ms HUI Shuk-yee briefly introduced the TD's written reply.
70. Ms KANG Pu said she had no supplementary response.
71. Mr FONG Lung-fei expressed his views as follows:
- (a) He was told by residents that Yat Tung Estate's motorcycle parking spaces were insufficient, and they still had not been assigned a parking space despite having waited for a year. Besides, public parking spaces were not enough to meet the demand despite the TD's creation of new spaces, leading to dozens of motorcycles being ticketed for illegal parking in the Estate. He could not comprehend why the Department only created 30 additional parking spaces for motorcycles when there was a large vacant area nearby that could be rezoned to make full use of land by providing parking spaces. He could tell from his experience that it did not take much time to create new motorcycle parking spaces. Given the keen demand in the area, he urged the Department to address the livelihood problem as soon as possible.
 - (b) Many residents worked in food delivery service and delivered takeaway food on motorcycle, but the Department underestimated the number of motorcycles in the area. He requested that the Department examine the number of motorcycles when most motorcyclists returned to Tung Chung for parking between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Residents also said that the parking berths for motorcycles were so wide that three motorcycles could fit into two berths, and thus he suggested making the parking spaces narrower to provide more of them. Many takeaway motorcyclists were from the grassroots, but they would rather be self-reliant than applying for government subsidies. However, they were forced to park illegally and got ticketed due to a dearth of parking berths. It was incumbent upon the Department to address the issue as soon as possible.
72. The Chairman said when he was inspecting Mun Tung Estate with the TD's staff, he told them that the demand for motorcycle parking spaces was increasing rapidly as many residents, particularly young people, engaged in takeaway delivery. He hoped the Department would resolve the livelihood issues with concrete measures.
73. Ms HUI Shuk-yee said the Department would review the demand for parking spaces in the vicinity of Yat Tung Estate, including the occupancy rates of motorcycle parking spaces in car parks and on-street parking spaces, as well as the illegal parking condition. The Department would study with relevant departments the proposal to provide more motorcycle parking spaces and its feasibility where necessary. As for the width of motorcycle parking spaces, the Department would normally adopt the relevant design standards when determining the width and length of new parking

spaces. The standard width of a motorcycle parking space is one metre, and the designs in the future would continue to adopt this standard.

VII. Question on proposal of extending the taxi stand at Yat Tung Street to the lay-by outside Kan Yat House
(Paper T&TC 32/2021)

74. The Chairman welcomed Ms HUI Shuk-yee, Engineer/Islands2 of the TD, Ms KANG Pu, District Engineer/General (2)B of the HyD and Mr TSANG Wai-man, Administrative Assistant/Lands of the DLO to the meeting to respond to Members' questions. The written replies prepared by the TD, the DLO and the PlanD had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

75. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly introduced the question.

76. Ms HUI Shuk-yee briefly introduced the TD's written reply.

77. Ms KANG Pu said the works of the relevant taxi stand would commence in the beginning of next year, and Members could submit their views, if any, to the Department within this year.

78. The Chairman suggested that the relevant proposal be followed up on and discussed in detail by the T&TC Working Group.

79. Mr FONG Lung-fei said he raised the question at the T&TC precisely because he wanted to follow up on it at the Working Group, and he agreed that Members should discuss it in detail at that time.

VIII. Question on Sun Ferry's restriction on passengers travelling with pets on fast ferries plying between Central and Mui Wo
(Paper T&TC 33/2021)

80. The Chairman welcomed Mr YEUNG Chun-wing, Jun, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 2 of the TD, Ms CHAU Shuk-man, Anthea, Senior Corporate Communications Manager of Sun Ferry Services Company Limited (Sun Ferry) and Ms NGAN Yee-ling, Community Development Manager, and Ms WONG Ka-yee, Research and Development Officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) (SPCA) to the meeting to respond to members' questions.

81. The Chairman briefly introduced the question.

82. Mr Jun YEUNG said that under the current legislation, ferry operators might decide at its own discretion whether to allow passengers to board the ferry with pets. The Central-Mui Wo route was one of the routes that permitted passengers to board with their pets under certain conditions. The Department understood that some

residents would like to see the conditions for bringing pets on board relaxed, and it would forward those views to ferry operators for consideration. The Department reiterated that ferry operators had various factors to consider, including the nature of the route, the type of ferry and operating conditions, to balance different passenger needs.

83. Ms Anthea CHAU gave a response as follows:

- (a) As a ferry operator that provided public transport services, Sun Ferry was all along committed to balancing passengers' different needs, and it therefore did not ban passengers from travelling with their pets. All routes serving outlying islands (including Central-Cheung Chau and Central-Mui Wo routes) required that passengers carrying pets should be seated at the ordinary class area of an ordinary ferry. On double-decked ferries, ordinary class seats were provided on the upper deck apart from the deck where the generators were located; on triple-decked ferries, ordinary class seats took up the entirety of two decks, and pets could stay at locations far from the generators. Although ordinary ferries were not air conditioned, they were equipped with ventilation systems, and passengers could choose the window seats with better ventilation.
- (b) Sun Ferry made no arrangements for pet-carrying passengers to travel on fast ferries for the following reasons: First, Sun Ferry's fast ferries were almost 20 years old and were fitted only with basic central ventilation systems, which could not adjust the ventilation of individual areas. If passengers were allowed to board fast ferries with pets, the pets' hair and body odour might spread via the ventilation system, which would be detrimental to passengers allergic to pets. Second, Central-Mui Wo fast ferries had high occupancy rates. Taking the non-peak hours of 14 July this year as an example, the occupancy rate reached almost 70% on the off-peak ferry departing from Mui Wo at 12:10 p.m. and even exceeded 80% on the one departing from Mui Wo at 4:50 p.m. For passengers with catophobia, cynophobia, etc., being confined to a cramped space with animals for over half an hour could produce intense fear and anxiety. Third, as fast ferries had limited non-seating areas available, having pets at the aisles would not only cause obstruction and endanger passenger safety but could also lead to injuries to pets when passengers moved along the aisles. Conversely, when passengers travelled on ordinary ferries with pets, there would not be any adverse impact on other passengers arising from ventilation. Also, as the occupancy rates of ordinary ferries were lower (taking the rush hours on 14 July this year as an example, the occupancy rates were merely 21% for the ferry departing Mui Wo at 7:10 a.m. and 29% for the one departing Central at 6:30 p.m.), passengers with catophobia and cynophobia could choose

seats that were farther away from animals, and there were also adequate non-seating areas for pets.

- (c) Mui Wo had a more well-developed traffic network vis-à-vis other islands, and passengers could take buses or taxis when ferries were unavailable. Besides, according to online information, there were animal clinics in Tung Chung and Lantau Island, including those operated by the SPCA. To enhance the flexibility of ferry services, and in consideration of the lack of ordinary ferries serving the Central-Mui Wo route between 10:00 p.m. and the early hours, Sun Ferry had made special arrangements in 2019 to allow passengers with pets to board fast ferries with low occupancy if they had an urgent need to take their pets to the vets at the urban areas. For example, the ferries departing from Mui Wo for Central at 10:40 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on 14 July this year had an occupancy rate of 9% and 3% respectively.
- (d) Sun Ferry understood the need of passengers with pets, but arrangements could not yet be made for them to travel on fast ferries due to the design, available room and occupancy rates of the ferries. Sun Ferry would align with the Department's scheme of building new ferries for routes serving outlying islands by designating areas for pets on new fast ferries and improving the ventilation of those areas. It was hoped that passengers would soon be able to travel on fast ferries with their pets.

84. Ms NGAN Yee-ling gave a response as follows:

- (a) According to the statistics of pet keeping in Hong Kong compiled by the Census and Statistics Department in 2018, approximately 242 000 households (or 10% of all households) kept pets, which was a large number. Therefore, it was necessary to address the needs of those families to maintain inclusiveness and harmony in society. The main reason for people to move to the outlying islands was because of the tranquil and relaxed environment which was suitable for pets. When the TD and transport operators stipulated relevant provisions, they should take into account not just the needs and welfare of animals but also the emotional needs of both pets and owners, including the anxiety of owners when their pets were ill. She urged all parties to exercise discretion by considering the actual circumstances and human factors, rather than simply focusing on analysing the figures.
- (b) Given that 10% of Hong Kong households kept pets, the SPCA hoped that Hong Kong would implement pet-friendly policies in a practical manner. As the society became more affluent, people should not have a backward mentality and cling to the way of thinking in the 70s and 80s when the economy was worse. Pet keeping should be a reasonable choice and benefit for most residents of a contemporary

society. In addition, research suggested that pet keeping should promote human mental health. She hoped that various transport operators would approach the matter fairly and objectively to balance the needs of all parties.

- (c) Pet owners living in the urban areas had more transport options to take their pets to the vet, but those living on outlying islands had limited options, especially during off-peak hours. During the summer when temperatures were above 30°C, sick pets would feel stuffy and nervous inside pet carriers, and owners would worry about them having a heat stroke on the way to the vet, which might exacerbate their conditions or result in death. The SPCA hoped that ferry operators would exercise discretion and allow passengers to travel on fast ferries with sick pets in emergency situations, provided that passengers applied in advance and produced a medical certificate stating the pet's condition and the appropriate time for medical treatment.

85. The Chairman said that in recent years, Taipei and New Zealand were committed to building a society that was inclusive to humans and animals by respecting and safeguarding the rights and welfare of animals. Given that both Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited and Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Limited allowed passengers to travel on fast ferries with pets, he hoped Sun Ferry would take people's advice and allow pet-carrying passengers to travel on fast ferries, as well as providing information on passengers' phobia of animals and relevant complaint cases for reference. According to Animal-friendly Measures in Selected Places, Taipei allowed passengers to travel with pets on seven designated bus routes during the weekends and holidays, while major cities in New Zealand including Wellington and Auckland had eased restrictions to allow passengers to carry small pets in carriers during off-peak hours. He quoted President Lincoln of the United States in saying that "...I am in favour of animal rights as well as human rights. That is the way of a whole human being." He urged Sun Ferry to relax the conditions for passengers travelling with pets.

86. Ms Anthea CHAU gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Although Sun Ferry only allowed passengers to travel with pets on ordinary ferries under the current policies, it had received at least two complaints about pets on the ferry since July this year, and two relevant complaints in June alone. As a public transport service operator, Sun Ferry had to balance the needs of different passengers. As for other ferry operators not imposing any restrictions on pets, she explained that Sun Ferry differed from others in the model and design of its ferries.
- (b) Sun Ferry had all along advocated for kindness to animals and promoted the SPCA's activities in its piers for free. She hoped Members and the SPCA would understand that the ideal arrangements

could not be put in place owing to the limitations of the ferry design. She cited as an example that breastfeeding rooms were only available on ordinary ferries due to spatial and safety concerns on the vessels. Sun Ferry had already made the most appropriate arrangements possible.

87. Ms Josephine TSANG expressed her views as follows:

- (a) Pets are people's best companions. She was opposed to Sun Ferry's ban on passengers travelling with pets on fast ferries and questioned the company whether passengers travelling on the fast ferries of Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited and Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Limited were not afraid of pets. She said priority seats for pets were available on the front row of Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry's fast ferries, and other passengers would normally give up those seats to passengers travelling with pets.
- (b) On the issue of animal hair, she believed no passenger travelling with pets would comb their animals' hair on the ferry. Besides, as vet clinics in Mui Wo and Tung Chung might not be able to treat all illnesses and pet owners should have the right to choose, it was unfair to require animals to be treated on outlying islands only.

88. Mr WONG Man-hon expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Sun Ferry's approach was right. Some residents would feel nervous or even afraid when encountering dogs. Moreover, Sun Ferry was not currently banning passengers from travelling with pets but merely requiring them to take ordinary ferries. He disagreed with the view that areas near the generators were stuffier or had worse conditions. He often sat on the ferry's lower deck and found it cool with good ventilation. He stressed he was not against caring for animals, but he felt there was nothing wrong with Sun Ferry's arrangements.
- (b) Mui Wo residents might take their pets to animal clinics outside Lantau Island by ordinary ferries or land transport. They were not obliged to take air-conditioned fast ferries.

89. Mr Ken WONG expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Star Ferry also did not allow passengers to travel with pets. His family members had to take a taxi to travel between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island when bringing their pets along. He found Sun Ferry's arrangements appropriate.
- (b) Peng Chau residents could take the newer models of fast ferries when they brought their pets, but there was no veterinary service in Peng

Chau. He asked the SPCA if they could ask the Government Flying Service (GFS) to help transport sick pets to urban areas with helicopters in the early hours. There was nothing wrong with Sun Ferry's current practice as Mui Wo residents were allowed to travel with pets on fast ferries with low occupancy at night, and they could also take a taxi. On the other hand, when pets on Peng Chau, Cheung Chau and Lamma Island suffered from acute illness at night, there was nothing the owners could do. Instead, he asked if the SPCA could provide services for pets on remote islands.

- (c) When it came to the design of new vessel types, the TD had kept up with the times and considered allowing passengers to travel with pets. Besides, the Department should review Star Ferry's no-pet-on-board arrangements.
- (d) He liked pets but also had family members who were afraid of pets. He thus recognised the importance of balancing the needs of different residents when the authorities stipulated the arrangements for pets on ferries. The TD could assist ferry operators in carrying out a comprehensive consultation to gauge the residents' views.

90. Mr HO Chun-fai said he liked cats and dogs but would experience an allergic reaction when being with animals in a confined space. He thus agreed that Sun Ferry's current arrangements could balance the needs of various parties.

91. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) When he received the question, he was perplexed by the fact that pets could only sit next to the generators, but he grasped the actual situation and saw the need after listening to Sun Ferry's response. He agreed with what the SPCA said about the mental health benefits of pet keeping, but he felt it was not easy for ferry operators to balance the needs of different parties.
- (b) He noted that Sun Ferry's fast ferries were different from its other ferries in that they were over 20 years old, with central ventilation systems which were unable to adjust the ventilation of individual areas. If pets were allowed on fast ferries, the ventilation system might spread allergens all over the cabin when in operation.
- (c) Sun Ferry had permitted passengers to travel with pets in emergency cases and when occupancy rates were below 10%. Given that the company received at least two pet-related complaints a month, he took the view that the current arrangements were already aggressive.
- (d) Besides being placed near the generators, pets could also be placed in quieter spots on the second deck of triple-decked ferries. He

respected residents' right to choose a veterinarian, but they could also opt for other means of transport like ordinary ferries and taxis. He understood animal lovers' helplessness of not being able to take their pets to the urban areas by fast ferries. However, considering the needs of all parties, particularly before Sun Ferry was equipped with new vessels that could adjust the ventilation of particular areas, the current arrangements were more appropriate.

92. Ms LAU Shun-ting said there were also many residents on Lamma Island who loved animals. She praised the Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry for not only addressing the needs of residents properly, but also advocating animal care. She also agreed with Mr Ken WONG's suggestion and hoped that the SPCA would seriously consider the urgent medical needs of pets on remote islands during the early hours and arrange for GFS service.

93. The Chairman expressed respect for Members' diverse opinions and recognised that certain residents were allergic to or fearful of cats and dogs. He recommended Members to read the information note on Animal-friendly Measures in Selected Places, which he believed could help allay concerns. Also, during the Legislative Council discussion on 23 Jan 2019 on the protection of animal rights and welfare, the Secretary for Food and Health stated the Government would further enhance the protection of animal rights. He invited Members to read the relevant document to gain an understanding of the Government's approach.

94. Ms Anthea CHAU thanked Members for their understanding and stated that Sun Ferry had made its best effort to balance the needs of all parties. She added that most of the other ferry operators had only one vessel type which could adjust the ventilation within the cabin, but Sun Ferry's arrangements differed as it had two vessel types.

95. Ms NGAN Yee-ling said she knew some residents might be allergic to or fearful of animals and understood the difficulties operators faced. The SPCA was not only concerned about animal welfare. Its hope was that discretion would be exercised under special circumstances (such as pets with severe illness), with a balance struck between different interests.

IX. Question on Discovery Bay car rental service
(Paper T&TC 37/2021)

96. The Chairman said the written reply of the Discovery Bay Transit Services Limited (DBTSL) had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting. Former Member Ms Amy YUNG entrusted him to raise the question on her behalf.

97. The Chairman briefly introduced the question and explained that the two main points raised by former Member Ms Amy YUNG were the shortage of drivers and the need to improve the mobile app. DBTSL, however, did not send any

representative to the meeting and only replied briefly in writing that the mobile app contractor would study the ways to enhance the efficiency of the app to improve service quality. DBTSL did not mention any timetable for improvement measures or any plan to increase the number of drivers.

98. Mr Ken WONG said car rental service was a private business matter involving private disputes between owners and the management company. He doubted whether the issue should be discussed at the IDC. Besides, he was dissatisfied that non-Discovery Bay residents had to pay 20% more for taking the Discovery Bay residents' buses and queue at the end of the line for a long time. However, there was no channel for them to complain as Discovery Bay was a private development.

99. The Chairman said residents' bus service operators had to hold a valid licence and be subject to regulation under applicable laws. He asked the relevant departments to supplement more information. He added that the IDC had discussed issues related to Discovery Bay in the past.

100. Mr Ken WONG said the problem with residents' buses was that the laws allowed shuttle buses to pick up non-residents, who found it difficult to get their opinions accepted. They complained that students from Peng Chau had to pay 20% more in fare to go to school in Tung Chung by Discovery Bay residents' buses, but the reply they received only stated that residents' buses were an official mode of transport and DBTSL did not need to conduct any consultation before relocating a bus stop. As legal issues were involved, it would be more effective for the TD and DBTSL to handle the matter rather than discussing it at the IDC.

101. Ms Eunice LEUNG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Discovery Bay's car rental service was directly operated by DBTSL and was different from residents' bus service.
- (b) Residents' bus service was regulated by the passenger service licence issued by the Commissioner for Transport (C for T) under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) and its subsidiary legislation and was authorised by the C for T to operate in accordance with the relevant conditions. The main purpose of residents' bus service was to facilitate residents to commute to and from residential areas. In general, service applications had to be certified by resident representatives before the TD's approval. Discovery Bay Services Management Limited acted on behalf of Discovery Bay residents to authorise DBTSL to submit an application to the TD for operating the service. After confirming that the resident representatives agreed with the terms of service, the TD would approve DBTSL to operate different residents' bus routes.

- (c) The Department would convey to DBTSL the views regarding the queuing arrangement for non-residents taking Discovery Bay residents' buses and the service hours. Any changes made in the future would be posted at the bus stops to notify relevant Members, residents and stakeholders.

102. Mr Ken WONG said the law must safeguard the interest of all passengers. The current problem was that the TD required students from Peng Chau to take the Discovery Bay residents' buses for going to school in Tung Chung, but they had no say in the bus routes due to the outdated laws. Moreover, DBTSL could even apply to the TD for fare increase and relocation of bus stops seven working days in advance. Given that residents' buses could pick up non-residents and was recognised as an official mode of transport by the TD, the Department had to monitor and resolve the relevant issues, and empower passengers to express their opinions.

103. The Chairman commented that Discovery Bay was like an independent kingdom, and it only sent representatives to attend the meetings occasionally.

104. Mr Randy YU said as Discovery Bay was a constituency of the IDC, it was only natural that Members followed up on livelihood issues raised by the residents. The representative of the company responsible for the management of Discovery Bay was a non-official member of the T&TC. It was up to Members to decide whether the reply was satisfactory or not. He agreed with Mr Ken WONG's views on residents' buses and believed that the TD had to study the issue.

105. Ms Josephine TSANG said students from Peng Chau were assigned to go to school in Tung Chung under the school net system. It was unreasonable to ask them to go to Central by ferry and then interchange to the MTR to head to Tung Chung. Schoolchildren therefore had to travel a long way to Tung Chung by interchanging to a residents' bus at Discovery Bay. Besides, parents who accompanied students to and from school had to pay 20% more in bus fare too. The school net system was unfair to Peng Chau students and parents alike.

106. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the Department would review the mechanism for approving adjustment to the Discovery Bay residents' bus service and would follow up with DBTSL to study other feasible improvement measures.

X. Question on abuse of Discovery Bay Residents' Service
(Paper T&TC 38/2021)

107. The Chairman said the written reply of DBTSL had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting. Former Member Ms Amy YUNG entrusted him to raise the question on her behalf.

108. The Chairman briefly introduced the question.

109. Ms Eunice LEUNG said she had no supplementary information.
110. Mr Ken WONG expressed his views as follows:
- (a) Residents were given priority to board Discovery Bay residents' buses. He asked the Department what should be done if students were unable to board the buses for Discovery Bay. At first, the TD allowed the residents' buses to pick up non-residents, but later it kicked away the ladder by asking non-residents to pay 20% more in bus fare while treating them as second-class passengers.
 - (b) He said he would rather have the residents' buses reserved for Discovery Bay residents only, and then the government should consider providing bus service for the students or amend Peng Chau's school net.
 - (c) The residents' bus service involved the establishment of a bus stop in Tung Chung, which occupied public space. The TD's licensing decision was questionable. The Department should review the relevant ordinance.
111. Ms Eunice LEUNG said the TD would review the queuing arrangement for the residents' bus and consider expanding the categories of priority passengers to include students.
112. Mr Randy YU said the question raised by Mr Ken WONG was a serious problem. He believed it should be passed to the T&TC Working Group for follow-up. If the problem could not be resolved, they could fight for amending Peng Chau's school net with Peng Chau's DC Members.
113. The Chairman invited Mr Ken WONG to submit the issue to the T&TC Working Group for discussion.

XI. Any Other Business

Highways Department's Minor Traffic Improvement Projects and Works Schedules

114. The Chairman welcomed Ms KANG Pu, District Engineer/General (2)B of the HyD, to the meeting to respond to Members' questions. The Department submitted the minor traffic improvement projects and works schedules of Islands District as at early July this year prior to the meeting. Members were welcome to ask questions and express their views.

115. Members noted the relevant documents.

XII. Date of next meeting

116. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next meeting would be held at 10:30 a.m. on 27 September 2021 (Monday).

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