

(Translation)

Islands District Council
Minutes of Meeting of Traffic and Transport Committee

Date : 20 February 2024 (Tuesday)

Time : 2:30 p.m.

Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room

14/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present

Chairman

Ms WONG Chau-ping

Vice-chairman

Mr YIP Pui-kei

Members

Mr NG Man-kit

Mr HO Siu-kei

Mr HO Chun-fai

Mr YU Hon-kwan, MH, JP

Mr CHOW Yuen-kuk, Jonathan

Ms KWOK Wai-man, Mealoha

Mr HUI Chun-lung, MH

Mr WONG Man-hon, MH

Mr WAN Yeung-kin

Mr LAU Chin-pang

Ms LAU Suk-han

Ms LAU Shun-ting

Mr LUO Chenghuan

Attendance by Invitation

Ms KWOK Oi-yan

Mr SUM Wang-shing, Sam

Mr AU Kak-loi, Peter

Mr CHENG Siu-kwan, Ken

Mr NG Cheuk-ting, Jonathan

Ms WONG Shuk-man, Suman

Mr Calvin TSANG

Mr Dennis YIP

Senior Engineer/Railway Schemes (15), Highways Department

Engineer/Railway Schemes (19), Highways Department

Senior Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 2,

Transport Department

Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 4, Transport Department

Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 8, Transport Department

Engineer/Lantau Development, Transport Department

Senior Corporate Communications Officer, Citybus Limited

Planning Officer, Citybus Limited

Ms Sophia WOO	Assistant General Manager-Transportation, Discovery Bay Transportation Services
Mr Peter TSANG	Senior Executive Manager-Transportation, Discovery Bay Transportation Services
Mr Leo LEE	Director, Commerce Department, Fortune Ferry Company Limited
Mr Hubert HU	Manager, Operation Department, Fortune Ferry Company Limited
Mr Bill CHAN	Deputy Manager, Operation Department, Fortune Ferry Company Limited
Mr Stephen WAN	Manager, Operations, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Desmond TANG	Assistant Manager, Operations Support, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Karl HUEN	Assistant Manager, Public Affairs, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Jeffrey CHAN	Senior Construction Manager-Civil, MTR Corporation Limited
Mr Douglas CHAM	Senior Construction Engineer-Civil, MTR Corporation Limited
Mr Henry MAN	Senior Corporate Communications Manager-Capital Works, MTR Corporation Limited
Mr FUNG Wai-chung	Senior Liaison Manager, MTR Corporation Limited
Mr Stephen CHEUNG	Senior Liaison Engineer, MTR Corporation Limited
Mr Peter CHU	Senior Manager (Operations and Administration), New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited
Mr HO Lee-yip	Manager, District Relations, New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas	Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Mrs RADFORD Kit-ye, Kitty	Administrative Assistant/Lands (District Lands Office, Islands), Lands Department
Ms KANG Pu	Engineer/Islands(2), Highways Department
Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan	Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1, Transport Department
Mr LUK Cheuk-man, Eric	Senior Transport Officer/Islands 2, Transport Department
Mr WONG Yui-him, Tim	Engineer/Islands 1, Transport Department
Mr LEE Lap-man	Engineer/Islands 2, Transport Department

Secretary

Ms CHEUNG Hoi-Kam, Nicole	Executive Officer (District Council)3, Islands District Office
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Absent with Apology

Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH

Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives of government departments to the meeting.

I. Confirmation of the Minutes of Special Meeting held on 19 January 2024

2. The Chairman said that amendments proposed by government departments, representatives of organisations and Members had been incorporated in the above minutes, which had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting. The captioned minutes were confirmed by Members unanimously.

II. Progress of MTR Tung Chung Line Extension Project (T&TC Paper No. 2/2024)

3. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 2/2024.

4. Mr Henry MAN and Mr Stephen CHEUNG briefly presented the paper with the aid of PowerPoint slides.

5. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) An enquiry was raised about the past efforts in liaison and consultation by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTR) with residents of the Tung Chung Crescent, and the locations of each exit in the Tung Chung West Station.
- (b) It was hoped that the MTR could complete the project ahead of schedule as soon as possible. It was also suggested that the Tung Chung Line Extension should be commissioned in phases rather than after the completion of the entire railway line, so as to relieve the traffic pressure in the district.
- (c) As the MTR's construction sites in the Tung Chung Crescent and Yat Tung Estate were close to residential areas, it was reflected by some residents that noise would be emitted from the sites from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., causing nuisance to them. Therefore, Members hoped that the MTR's works could commence at a later time. In addition, many residents of Yat Tung Estate engaged in night-shift work would stay at home to rest during daytime, hence Members hoped that the MTR would, on the premise of not affecting the progress of the works, step up its noise mitigation measures in addition to the use of noise insulating fabric.
- (d) It was hoped that suitable measures would be adopted by the MTR to reduce the traffic pressure on Shun Tung Road and Tat Tung Road

caused by works vehicles.

- (e) It was hoped that the MTR would strengthen its liaison with the community in the future and consider collaborating with the Care Teams in the district.
- (f) An enquiry was raised about the ancillary facilities of the above project, including the arrangements for bus stops and taxi stands, as well as the ancillary facilities in the carpark.

6. The Chairman asked the MTR how vibrations generated by the works could be minimised.

7. Mr Henry MAN gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The MTR had all along maintained close liaison with the Owners' Committee of the Tung Chung Crescent. Information on the MTR's works progress, Tung Chung West Station and the exit locations would also be released through its publications and website.
- (b) The project on Tung Chung Line Extension was scheduled for commissioning in 2029.
- (c) The MTR would continue to maintain close connection with the community, such that residents could be kept informed of the progress of the above project.
- (d) The government departments concerned would be responsible for the future transport facilities and the overall planning near the Tung Chung East Station.

8. Mr Stephen CHEUNG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Temporary noise enclosures were currently constructed at the construction site in the Tung Chung Crescent by the MTR to block the noises emitted from the site in the future.
- (b) It was mentioned by the MTR that works vehicles would only be arranged to enter the construction site should parking spaces be available, and works vehicles would not be arranged to park on the carriageway. In addition, works vehicles would leave the construction site only when the roads were clear, so as not to cause traffic congestion.
- (c) As there might be slight vibrations when the works above were underway, the MTR's project staff would make adjustments to manage the works by adopting various measures, such as operating not too many machines at a time and dispersing construction sites to minimise the vibrations generated.

III. Question on the enhancement of the services of routes B6 and 39M
(T&TC Paper No. 10/2024)

9. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 10/2024.

10. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan gave her response as follows:

- (a) The frequency of departures for New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB) route no. 39M from Tung Chung Station Bus Terminus during morning peak hours from Mondays to Fridays was around 7-8 minutes. Short-working departures for the above route were also operated from Mun Tung Estate to Tung Chung Station directly to divert passenger flow.
- (b) According to the NLB's recent operation record, the occupancy rate of departures from Mun Tung Estate between 7:30 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. was around 70 to 80%, indicating that passenger demand of the service concerned was met. The Transport Department (TD) would continue to closely monitor the passenger demand of route no. 39M with the NLB and would request the NLB to increase service frequency and deploy buses with higher carrying capacity in a timely manner to divert passenger flow.
- (c) At present, departures from Tung Chung Station Bus Terminus could only reach Tat Tung Road Bus Terminus by making a U-turn in Shun Tung Road via Tat Tung Road. Should the routing of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point bound trips of route no. B6 be arranged to reach the Tung Chung Station Bus Terminus first for the alighting of passengers, it would take around 10-15 more minutes to complete the trip and have an impact on the existing passengers and service stability. Therefore, the Department had reservations about the proposal in question for the time being.
- (d) Starting from 27 September 2023, fare concessions would be offered to passengers taking return trips of route no. B6 within the same day, whereas interchange concessions between route nos. B6 and 39M would be introduced to those taking both trips within the same day, so as to provide passengers from Mun Tung Estate with an additional option to travel to and from Tung Chung Station. Passengers could have their return trip for free should they take route no. B6 to travel from Mun Tung Estate to Tung Chung Town Centre between 5:00 a.m. and 11:45 p.m. and take route no. 39M or B6 to travel from Tung Chung Station or one of its subsequent bus stops to Mun Tung Estate, provided that the same Octopus card was used for both trips within the same day. Instead of taking route no. 39M, passengers in Mun Tung Estate could currently choose to take route no. B6 and alight at Tat Tung Road Bus Terminus before walking to Tung Chung MTR Station in around five minutes to reach Tung Chung Town Centre as well. In this way, the fare difference was only about \$1.7.

- (e) As regards the collaboration between the NLB and the MTR in offering interchange concessions for route no. B6, the Government had all along encouraged public transport operators to offer fare concessions as far as possible after taking into consideration their operating conditions and the socio-economic circumstances.

11. Mr Peter CHU gave his response as follows:

- (a) Subject to the availability of resources, one to two special departures for route no. 39M would be operated in the mornings to divert passenger flow in Mun Tung Estate.
- (b) As regards the collaboration between the NLB and the MTR to offer interchange concessions for route no. B6, the NLB had started to explore the above proposal with the MTR and would inform Members of any progress as soon as possible.

12. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) It was mentioned in the TD's reply that the occupancy rate of departures from Mun Tung Estate between 7:30 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. was around 70 to 80%. Members however observed that despite an occupancy rate of merely around 80%, some passengers were still unable to board a bus as some others were reluctant to board the upper deck even with vacant seats, whilst the lower deck was fully occupied. Hence, Members suggested that the NLB's bus captains should ask passengers to board the upper deck, thereby making room in the lower deck for more passengers to board the bus. Members also hoped that additional departures would be operated by the NLB between 7:30 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. to divert passenger flow.
- (b) Although the NLB offered fare concessions to passengers taking return trips of route no. B6 within the same day and introduced interchange concessions between route nos. B6 and 39M to passengers taking return trips within the same day, the passenger flow was not diverted by route no. B6 effectively as passengers would still have to walk for a certain distance to Tung Chung Station after alighting from the bus. Furthermore, there was a huge difference in the actual fare between route nos. B6 and 39M. Members hoped that the Department and the NLB could evaluate the routing of route no. B6 and suggested that the Department and NLB should conduct a site visit with Members concerned to discuss the improvement options.
- (c) Departures for both route nos. B6 and 39M would be operated between Mun Tung Estate and Tung Chung MTR Station. Although the NLB had offered fare concessions to passengers taking route no. B6, it was not very attractive and most passengers would still choose to take route no. 39M, resulting in an inefficient use of resources for route no. B6. In addition, despite a total fare difference of merely about \$1.7, it only cost \$3.7 to take route no. 39M. With a huge disparity in fare levels,

most passengers would choose to take route no. 39M.

13. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The TD would continue to closely monitor the passenger demand of various bus routes through on-site surveys and reviewing the operational data of the bus company. Also, it would encourage the bus company to enhance the service in question subject to the availability of resources, as well as to incorporate special departures into the ordinary service schedule to facilitate passengers in planning their journeys. In addition, the Department would discuss with the NLB on the deployment of its bus captains or staff to the bus stops as far as practicable, such that they could ask passengers to board the upper decks of buses. In this way, more passengers would be able to board the bus and the use of bus resources could be optimised.
- (b) While Members said that only a few passengers would take route no. B6 from Mun Tung Estate, the Department noted that more passengers would take the above route in Tung Chung Town Centre at weekends. The Department therefore considered that the current arrangement of boarding at the Tat Tung Road Bus Terminus appropriate. In addition, the Department would welcome a site visit with Members after the meeting to discuss the enhancement options.

14. Mr Peter CHU took note of Members' views and would instruct the bus captains and station masters to ask passengers to board the upper deck of a bus as far as possible, so as to optimise the use of space in the bus compartment. The NLB would also explore ways to optimise the existing bus services to attract more passengers to take Route B6 during the morning hours.

IV. Question on the enhancement of holiday services on route 37M and the introduction of section fares on route B6
(T&TC Paper No. 7/2024)

15. The Chairman referred to the T&TC Paper No. 7/2024.

16. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan gave her response as follows:

- (a) Currently, the frequency of departures for route no. 37M on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays was around 10-12 minutes. According to a site inspection conducted by the TD in Tung Chung Station Bus Terminus between 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. on 9 December 2023 (Saturday), the average occupancy rate of the above route during the busiest hour was around 65%, indicating that passenger demand of the service concerned was met. The Department also observed that with a higher occupancy rate of individual departures that day, the NLB had increased the frequency to around 2-6 minutes. In a letter by the TD, the NLB was requested to closely monitor the service standard of the

route in question and enhance its services in a timely manner to meet passenger demand.

- (b) As regards the service of route no. B6, while the NLB offered fare concessions to passengers taking return trips within the same day, the Department would continue to encourage the NLB to offer more concessions to achieve better diversion effect.

17. Mr Peter CHU gave his response as follows:

- (a) The NLB had all along been monitoring the service standard of route no. 37M. The NLB would enhance the services of the above route on Saturdays and Sundays as far as resources permit, notwithstanding the current staffing constraints.
- (b) The NLB would explore the possibility of optimising fare concessions offered to passengers of route no. B6 who took return trips within the same day, such that there would be greater incentives for more passengers to take the above route. In addition, the NLB would explore the provision of two-way section fares concessions on the above route.

18. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) Route no. 37M was the main bus route between Tung Chung North and Tung Chung Town Centre, with a frequency of 5 to 8 minutes and 10 to 12 minutes on weekdays and on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. As residents started to move into Yue Nga Court, there was an increase of almost 10 000 residents in the district. Therefore, Members considered that departures on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays would fail to meet passenger demand. As it was difficult for passengers to predict the arrival times of the special departures, Members considered that it was not desirable for the NLB to divert passenger flow by operating special departures and hoped that additional regular departures could be operated during peak hours.
- (b) The number of departures for NLB route no. 38 was consistent throughout the week. Taking this as an example, Members asked the NLB whether the same pattern would be adopted for other routes, such that the departures on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays would not be reduced.
- (c) It was hoped that the NLB would provide section fares to route no. B6.

19. Mr Peter CHU said that the NLB had taken note of Members' views. As the current frequency of route no. 37M could meet passenger demand under normal circumstances, the NLB would explore the possibility of increasing the frequency during peak hours.

20. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan said that the TD would continue to closely monitor the

service standards of route nos. 37M and B6 and hoped that the NLB would increase the frequency during peak hours as soon as possible.

21. The Chairman suggested that the TD and the NLB should conduct a site visit with the relevant Members after the meeting to examine the arrangements for frequency enhancement during peak hours.

22. Members asked whether a working group on bus routes would be set up.

23. Mr Thomas LI said that the Islands District Office (IsDO) had taken note of Members' views. In addition to setting up a working group to discuss issues related to bus routes, Members could also consider other options, such as organising informal meetings, special meetings or following up on the matter with the departments concerned through other channels apart from conducting meetings.

V. Question on the improvement of the bus service of route E36A
(T&TC Paper No. 6/2024)

24. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 6/2024.

25. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan gave her response as follows:

- (a) Currently, the frequency of departures for Long Win Bus Company Limited (LWB) route no. E36A plying between Yat Tung Estate, Tung Chung and Tat Yip Street, Yuen Long was 25 to 30 minutes for most of the time. The TD had been closely monitoring the relevant passenger demand through on-site surveys and based on the operational data provided by the bus company. In the Department's recent site inspection, it was revealed that Yuen Long bound trips of the route during morning peak hours had a relatively higher occupancy rate. To this end, the Department requested the LWB to deploy buses with a greater passenger load or increase the frequency in order to divert passenger flow.
- (b) With effect from 30 July 2023, the LWB extended the service hours of route no. E36A on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. In addition, the Department approved the LWB's proposal to increase the frequency of Yuen Long bound trips of route no. E36A between 6:10 a.m. and 7:10 a.m. to 20 minute intervals with effect from 26 February this year. The Department would continue to keep in view the service and passenger demand of the route and request the bus company to make adjustments as appropriate.

26. Mr Stephen WAN said that the LWB had all along reviewed the occupancy rate of the route in question after residents had moved into Yue Nga Court. In view of the increase in the patronage of route no. E36A, buses with the greatest passenger load had been deployed as far as practicable. The LWB would continue to keep in view the operation of the route and make appropriate service adjustments when necessary.

27. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) As residents moved into Yue Nga Court, there had been a further increase in the demand of bus services. However, due to insufficient service frequency, residents were often unable to board buses as they were already full. Residents also found the bus schedule very confusing as there were lost trips from time to time.
- (b) It was hoped that the LWB would provide data on the occupancy rate of route no. E36A during peak hours, as well as the actual bus arrival frequency time.
- (c) It was observed that some departures were operated by buses with only 119 seats instead of those with the highest passenger load. As a result, more than ten passengers were often unable to board the buses as they were already full.
- (d) It was hoped that the LWB and the TD would closely examine the operation of each bus route.

28. Mr Stephen WAN said that the LWB had already deployed buses with the highest passenger load to operate route no. E36A during peak hours between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. as far as practicable, yet the deployment might sometimes be unavailable due to maintenance or breakdown. With effect from 26 February this year, the frequency of Yuen Long bound trips of route no. E36A between 6:10 a.m. and 7:10 a.m. would be increased to 20 minutes. The LWB hoped that the situation where passengers being unable to board a buses due to insufficient capacity would improve.

29. The Chairman asked the TD and the LWB to conduct site visits to the bus stops in question with Members concerned during morning peak hours. As multiple topics would be discussed in this Committee, she suggested that Members should first raise an issue with the departments concerned, and an enquiry should only be submitted to this Committee should the issue remain unresolved, with a view to enhancing the efficiency of the meetings.

VI. Question on the provision of sectional fares concession for the routes of Long Win Bus Company Limited in the Tung Chung district
(T&TC Paper No. 14/2024)

30. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 14/2024.

31. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan gave her response as follows:

- (a) As direct bus services plying between Tung Chung and other districts were mainly provided by LWB route nos. E36A and E42P, the TD had to strike a balance between various transport demands of short-haul and long-haul passengers when considering the provision of section fares to both inbound and outbound trips of the above routes. In this regard,

short-haul passengers would not take up any capacity reserved for long-haul routes, nor would they alight at the mid-way stops, resulting in an excessively low occupancy rate of long-haul routes and an under-utilisation of public transport resources. Hence, the Department had reservations about the proposal in question.

- (b) At present, students and other passengers travelling to and from Tung Chung North and Tung Chung West could take NLB route nos. 37, 37P and 37H during morning peak hours. In the second half of January this year, the average occupancy rates of the routes concerned during the busiest hour in the mornings were around 50-60%, indicating that passenger demand of the services concerned was met. The Department would continue to closely monitor the passenger demand of each route and request the bus company to enhance the service of the routes when necessary.

32. Mr Desmond TANG said that the LWB would review the impact of the relevant proposal on long-haul passengers and explore its feasibility with the TD. At present, the LWB already offered short-haul concessionary section fares to passengers taking Yat Tung Estate bound trips of route no. E36A. The LWB and the Department would explore the possibility of offering short-haul concessionary section fares for the Yuen Long bound trips.

33. Members remarked that both the number of bus routes plying between Yat Tung Estate and Tung Chung North and the service frequency were very limited. Amongst these routes, services of route nos. 37 and 37P were only available from Mondays to Fridays (except school holidays) and only a few trips were provided throughout the day. As for route no. 37H, which operated at a frequency of 20 to 30 minutes, the journey time from Yat Tung Estate to Ying Tung Estate was as long as half an hour, and therefore many residents would rather take route no. E21 or E36A instead. Members hoped that the LWB would introduce short-haul fare concessions for both inbound and outbound trips of route nos. E36A and E42P, and that the TD would enhance the bus network in Tung Chung.

34. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan said that the TD took note of Members' views and would explore with the bus companies the possibility of optimising the bus routes in Tung Chung in the light of passenger demand.

VII. Question on the enhancement of services of bus routes E11 and E21 series
(T&TC Paper No. 11/2024)

35. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 11/2024.

36. Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan gave her response as follows:

- (a) The frequency of departures for Citybus Limited (Citybus) route no. E11S from Mun Tung Estate, Tung Chung to Tin Hau in the morning from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays) was around 5-20 minutes. To cater for passenger demand, additional departures at 7:50

a.m. and 6:40 a.m. had been added to the route on 23 April and 26 November 2023 respectively. According to the operational data provided by the bus company, the average occupancy rate of the route during the busiest hour was around 60%, indicating that the service could generally meet passenger demand.

- (b) Setting off at SKYCITY Transport Terminal, departures for Tin Hau bound trips of Citybus route no. E11A would route via Tung Chung Town Centre and Tung Chung North and its services were available until 4:00 p.m. every day, whilst the services of its airport bound trips were available between 1:20 p.m. and 12:00 midnight. Setting off at Mun Tung Estate, Tung Chung, departures for Citybus route no. E11B would route via Tung Chung West, Tung Chung Town Centre and Tung Chung North and its service hours were roughly the same as those of route no. E11A. Should the services for route nos. E11A and E11B be unavailable, passengers travelling to and from Tin Hau and Tung Chung might take Citybus route no. E11 that routed via Tung Chung Town Centre as its service was available for the whole day.
- (c) To enhance the direct bus services between Tung Chung and Hong Kong Island, the TD had proposed in the Bus Route Planning Programme 2023-2024 for Islands District to rationalise the services of route E11 series, including extending the services of route no. E11B between Mun Tung Estate, Tung Chung and Causeway Bay, enhancing the service and frequency of route no. E11S, cancelling route no. E11A, as well as adjusting the service hours of the Hong Kong Island bound trips of route no. E11. However, the Traffic and Transport Committee under the relevant District Council expressed concern over the impact brought about by the above proposal on passengers travelling between Hong Kong Island and the airport (particularly the airport staff), therefore the proposal in question was not implemented.
- (d) According to the operational data of the bus company, the current average occupancy rates of route nos. E11, E11A and E11B during the busiest hour were 40%, 60% and 70% respectively, indicating that the services were able to meet passenger demand.
- (e) Route N11 was a late-night route between the Central (Macau Ferry) and the Airport (Ground Transportation Centre), routing via the Tung Chung town centre, with service hours from 1:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. and frequency at 60-minute intervals. At present, passengers travelling to and from Tung Chung North and Hong Kong Island could first take NLB route no. N37 or LWB route no. N31 to reach Tung Chung Town Centre, and then interchange with route no. N11. It would take about 75 minutes to complete the whole trip of route no. N11 and an additional 10-15 minutes would be required if it were to make a detour via Tung Chung North, which might have an impact on certain passengers. In view of this, the Department had no plans at this stage to arrange for route no. N11 to bypass Tung Chung North. In addition, the main objective of providing night franchised bus services was to facilitate

passengers to travel between the Town Centre and residential areas during late night hours. As the patronage of late night franchised bus routes had been on the low side, bus companies might concentrate their resources on routes with more passengers, hence point-to-point services in individual areas or housing estates might not be provided.

- (f) As regards Citybus routes E21 series, route nos. E21 and E21A originally ran between AsiaWorld-Expo and Tai Kok Tsui, as well as between Yat Tung Estate, Tung Chung and Ho Man Tin respectively. However, the Department received comments raised by Councillors of the Islands District Council (IDC) in 2020 and 2021, indicating that the routing of route no. E21A in Tung Chung was too circuitous. Therefore, after reviewing the above options, the Department proposed in the Bus Route Planning Programme 2022-2023 for Islands District to adjust and split the bus routes concerned by diverting some of the return trips of route no. E21A to go through Tung Chung town centre instead of bypassing Tung Chung North, and to change the route number to route no. E21B. By splitting route no. E21A, direct bus services to and from Kowloon were provided to residents of Tung Chung West and Tung Chung Town Centre during certain periods, thereby shortening the travelling time between Kowloon and Hong Kong. To tie in with the adjustments of the routing of route no. E21A, the Department also adjusted and split the routing of route no. E21. The Department has also adjusted and split route no. E21 by diverting part of its frequency to Tung Chung North instead of bypassing Tung Chung town centre and renumbering the route as route no. E21D. After the adjustments, departures for route no. E21 now continued to route via the Airport Logistics Area and Tung Chung Town Centre for the whole day, such that direct bus services plying between Lantau Island and Kowloon were provided to passengers. In the meantime, passengers could take the suitable bus route at different times of the day. The above arrangement had been implemented with effect from 29 August 2022 and had balanced the impact on passengers in various districts as far as practicable. The Department would relay the views by Members in relation to route E21 series to the Citybus for consideration, and continue to keep in view the demand of passengers in Tung Chung and explore with the bus company the further adjustments on the relevant routes arrangements in a timely manner.

37. The Chairman said that as the response by the TD was rather lengthy, she suggested that a written reply should be submitted by the Department before the meeting in the future, such that Members would not have to take notes of the key points at the meeting.

38. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) It was suggested that an additional bus stop be set up at Central Ferry Piers, and the departures for overnight buses be arranged to route via Central Ferry Piers to tie in with overnight ferry services, with a view to facilitating the travel needs of residents living on the outlying islands in

the early hours of the morning.

- (b) It was strongly recommended that the routes E11 and E21 series of the Citybus should be rationalised and reference should be made to the LWB's practice of splitting route nos. E31 and E32A in 2019, so as to benefit residents of Tung Chung West and Tung Chung North at the same time. Currently, residents of Tung Chung West commented that the existing routings of routes E11 and E21 series were too long, whereas residents of Tung Chung North were often unable to board a bus as it was already full. Prior to the route splitting, LWB route no. E31 faced the same situation. As LWB route no. E31 was successfully split, Members questioned why the same could not be applied to routes E11 and E21 series.
- (c) In the Department's reply, it was indicated that the service in question could meet passenger demand with reference to the operational data of the bus company. However, Members disagreed with this and considered that many residents had already chosen to travel by MTR due to the circuitous routes, hence the bus company should not rely solely on the operational data to reach a conclusion that the bus services concerned were able to meet passenger demand. Members were of the view that many passengers would like to have direct bus services provided by the bus company, and therefore the occupancy rate alone could not fully reflect the demand of passengers.

39. Mr Calvin TSANG briefed Members on the written reply of the Citybus and hoped that Members could continue to raise their comments on the relevant services to the Citybus.

40. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) Although the Citybus had increased the frequency of route no. E11S, it had at the same time lengthened its routing to bypass bus stops in newly completed housing estates, hence the problem of some passengers not being able to board the buses due to full capacity still existed.
- (b) Route no. N37 only provided service until 2:00 am instead of overnight service. Members considered that the provision of overnight bus services was of paramount importance to those working shifts at the airport.
- (c) Many students in Tung Chung North had to travel to Ho Man Tin for schooling, but the Citybus had cancelled a bus route heading to Ho Man Tin, causing inconvenience to them.
- (d) To meet the demand of residents and cater for future development needs of Tung Chung New Town, the bus company and the TD should do a better job of route planning.

41. The Chairman suggested that the TD, in conjunction with the Citybus and Members concerned, should set up a working group to discuss improvement options for the routes E11 and E21 series.

VIII. Question on the addition of taxi stands in Discovery Bay
(T&TC Paper No. 9/2024)

42. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 9/2024.

43. Ms Suman WONG said that the TD had received a proposal from the owner of Discovery Bay, HKR International Limited (HKR), in 2023 on the provision of four additional taxi stands within Discovery Bay. As the land in Discovery Bay was privately owned and the carriageways within the land were private roads, the HKR was responsible for day-to-day traffic management and road maintenance. Having examined the HKR's proposal, the Department made comments on the traffic impact, road safety and public transport services and requested the HKR to provide supplementary information. In addition to traffic implications, the Department also considered that the proposal in question would have an impact on other aspects. To this end, the Department requested the HKR to consult the residents of Discovery Bay, the IDC and other government departments (including the Police and the Planning Department).

44. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) Residents of Discovery Bay were concerned about the impact of the above proposal on road capacity and traffic safety in the area. For instance, Members mentioned that there were shopping malls, residential buildings and schools along Discovery Bay Road, which connected southern and northern Discovery Bay, but there were no pedestrian crossing facilities, such as traffic lights or zebra crossings, along the entire road. Members queried that if taxis were allowed to enter Discovery Bay, there would be concerns about traffic safety in the area.
- (b) Members asked the TD whether a consultancy report on how to ensure road safety and documents on the results of the opinion survey had been provided by the HKR to support its proposal. In addition, Members asked whether the Department had referred to the above documents when the proposal was scrutinised.

45. Ms Suman WONG replied that in the traffic assessment report submitted by the HKR, it was estimated that the roads would have sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional taxi traffic. The TD had requested the HKR to provide supplementary information on road safety. In addition, no public opinion survey was mentioned in the above report.

46. Members asked whether the TD had consulted the public before reviewing the above proposal and said that more than two traffic accidents involving buses hitting school kids in the area had occurred at the road section of Discovery Bay Road near the

schools. As such, they considered that the Department should request the HKR to set up traffic lights and install speed enforcement cameras to ensure road safety and prevent the recurrence of similar accidents.

47. Ms Suman WONG noted the views of Members on the provision of additional traffic facilities to enhance road safety. As regards public consultation, the TD had requested the HKR to consult Members.

48. The Chairman hoped that the TD would arrange a meeting between Members and the HKR after the meeting to discuss the matter in detail.

(Post-meeting note: On 20 March 2024, the TD liaised with the relevant Members by phone to answer their questions.)

IX. Question on the proposed increase in Discovery Bay Ferry fares
(T&TC Paper No. 8/2024)

49. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 8/2024 and the written reply by the TD.

50. Mr Peter TSANG said that the patronage of the Discovery Bay Transportation Services (DBTS) had been seriously affected by the social incidents and the pandemic following its latest fare increase in June 2018, which was over five years ago. With high inflation rates and soaring petroleum prices over the past two to three years, the financial stability of the DBTS was further undermined. To maintain its ferry services and enhance its service quality consistently under the difficult operating environment, the DBTS considered that filing an application for a fare increase was the only way out. While part of the operating expenses of the DBTS was subsidised by the Government, it was still very difficult for the DBTS to turn into profits under the current situation where the operating cost was on the rise. He said that the extent of fare increase submitted by the DBTS to the TD was calculated on the basis of its actual financial situation in order to achieve a balanced income and expenditure.

51. Members said that the unclear economic prospects in Hong Kong at present had imposed a heavy burden on the everyday life of the public, hence all residents were opposed to the application submitted by the DBTS for a 60% fare increase. Members enquired the DBTS about the justifications behind and hoped that the TD could play its part as a gatekeeper in vetting the fare increase applications and conduct a comprehensive public consultation.

52. Mr Peter TSANG said that the DBTS had already submitted the budget concerned to the Department for scrutiny when it applied for a fare increase. In comparison to prices in 2018 (where the latest fare increase was implemented), the current prices of petroleum used by the DBTS had increased by about 70%. While expenses in petroleum made up a major portion of the operating costs, other costs (such as maintenance costs) had also been on the rise due to inflation. He said that the 60% fare increase had been calculated on the basis of the budget of the DBTS.

53. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) The current adult single trip fare for the “Discovery Bay – Central” route was \$46 and residents of Discovery Bay only had to pay \$33.5.
- (b) It was recognised that the current business environment was difficult. As many residents of Discovery Bay had emigrated, there was a reduction in the number of residents. Members suggested that the HKR, the parent company of the DBTS, should pay more attention to the situation of residents and support the operation of the DBTS.
- (c) It was suggested that monthly passes with a lower fare increase be offered to residents of Discovery Bay to alleviate their burden. In the meantime, fares for non-residents or tourists who visited Discovery Bay should be increased more significantly as a subsidy.
- (d) Members expressed disappointment that representatives of the TD did not attend the meeting to respond to the questions.
- (e) It was hoped that the DBTS would generate some non-farebox revenues to subsidise the operating expenses. If residents could not afford the travel expenses and moved out of Discovery Bay, the property prices in the area would further drop.
- (f) It was criticised that the application for a 60% fare increase put forward by the DBTS would only cause panic in society. Members were of the view that the TD’s policies on monitoring public transport service operators had been inflexible and Members hoped that the Chairman of the IDC could assist in following up on the above issue.

54. Mr Peter TSANG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The current adult single trip fare for the “Discovery Bay – Central” route was \$46. Residents of Discovery Bay only had to pay \$33.5 per trip if they paid by a registered Octopus card, whereas it cost around \$36.8 per trip for those who worked in Discovery Bay if they pay by their “T-Cards”. Therefore, most passengers would not need to pay the full fare of \$46. The DBTS was concerned that if a major proportion of the fare increase be imposed on those working in Discovery Bay, the competitiveness of other local enterprises and businesses in the labour market would be undermined, which would eventually pose an impact on the residents of Discovery Bay.
- (b) The current application for fare increase was submitted by the DBTS for the purpose of maintaining its ferry services and consistently enhancing its service quality. Although the extent of fare increase in this application was relatively high, the DBTS had not applied for any fare increase for the past five years, while other public transport service operators had applied for a fare increase on multiple occasions.

55. The Chairman considered that the DBTS should consult the public before applying for a fare increase, and the affordability of the public should be taken into account. She hoped that the TD could follow up on the above issue.

X. Question on a review of the Tai O ferry services provided by Fortune Ferry Company Limited
(T&TC Paper No. 5/2024)

56. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 5/2024.

57. Mr Peter AU briefly presented the written reply by the TD.

58. Mr Hubert HU said that as 26 December 2023 was a public holiday, there was a substantial increase in the number of tourists at Tai O, resulting in a longer time for the boarding and alighting of passengers as compared with that on weekdays. Therefore, there was a service delay of about 15-20 minutes for the scheduled sailing at 6:00 p.m. After liaising with the TD, the Fortune Ferry Company Limited. (Fortune Ferry) put forward some enhancement measures, which included deploying staff to pier at Tai O in the afternoon of Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays to disseminate information on the latest sailings to passengers, post notices about additional sailings, assist in diverting the passenger flow, maintain order and keep close liaison with passengers. Furthermore, additional departures would be operated by the Fortune Ferry on public holidays to meet passenger demand.

59. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) The incident above occurred around two months ago and the situation concerned had improved recently. Members considered that although the problem was not very serious, similar problems occurred about once every six months and were very disturbing to passengers.
- (b) It was hoped that the Fortune Ferry would step up its efforts in training its staff. In case of unforeseen incidents (such as a lost trip or a service delay), their staff should be reminded to proactively communicate with passengers and inform the relevant Members, so that they could disseminate the relevant information to residents.
- (c) Members were satisfied with the replies and follow-up work by the TD and the Fortune Ferry in the past two months, and hoped that the problem would not recur.
- (d) Members asked the Fortune Ferry whether the number of occurrences of the problem had decreased upon the commissioning of a new vessel.

60. Mr Hubert HU said that service suspension owing to monsoon had no longer occurred upon the commissioning of the new vessel. In the future, the Fortune Ferry would make prior arrangement before public holidays for deploying additional resources to meet passenger demand. In case of unforeseen incidents, the Fortune Ferry would disseminate the relevant information as early as possible and maintain

close communication with stakeholders.

61. Members said that they had received messages from individual boat operators reporting that some captains of the Fortune Ferry would drive at a high speed after entering a typhoon shelter. Members hoped that the Fortune Ferry would remind its captains to control the ferry speed after entering the typhoon shelter, so as to avoid causing waves that might pose hazards to the dinghies nearby.

XI. Question on the operation of ferry companies
(T&TC Paper No. 3/2024)

62. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 3/2024.

63. Mr Peter AU briefly presented the written reply by the TD.

64. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) The TD's reimbursement of pier rentals to the ferry operators and the exemption of vessel license fees could not directly mitigate the impact on ferry fares caused by the fluctuation in fuel prices.
- (b) As regards non-fare box revenues, although the Department had increased the commercial area available for leasing and improved the environment and facilities of the piers during pier refurbishment, it did not mean that the commercial area could be leased out successfully, nor could there be an increase in rental income. For example, although Central Ferry Piers No. 7 and No. 8 were nicely renovated, tenants there still struggled to sustain their business. Members suggested the Department to seek professional advice and enhance the accessibility of the Central Ferry Piers. It was also suggested that the Department should discuss with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau to turn Central Ferry Piers into a popular tourist attraction so as to increase the rental income from the piers.
- (c) Currently, the two electricity companies had set up fuel stabilisation funds. Members hoped that the Government would set up a similar fuel stabilisation fund for the ferry companies to help stabilise ferry fares.
- (d) Three bridges (i.e. Aberdeen-Lamma Island Bridge, Peng Chau-Discovery Bay Bridge and Cheung Chau-Chi Ma Wan Peninsula Bridge) were proposed to be constructed, but if the amount of investment involved was too large, an annual subsidy for the ferry routes equivalent to 1% of the investment amount would be provided instead. For example, if the total investment for constructing the three bridges connecting the relevant islands amounted to \$200 billion, 1% thereof (i.e. \$2 billion) would be used as an annual subsidy for the outlying island ferry routes to alleviate the travelling expenses of the residents.
- (e) It was hoped that the Chairman of this Committee would discuss with

the Chairman of the IDC on the possibility of inviting representatives of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) and the TD to meet with Members, so as to discuss the above proposal and to set up a non-permanent working group for exchange of views, which would help stabilise ferry fares.

- (f) It was hoped that the Department would promote the full commissioning of hybrid vessels and install additional charging facilities at the piers.

65. Mr Peter AU gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) On increasing non-farebox revenues, ferry operators had been liaising with professionals from various sectors to learn from their experience and professional advice.
- (b) As for the setting up of a fuel stabilisation fund, the Government reviewed ferry services connecting the outlying islands in 2019 and considered that the setting up of a fuel stabilization fund would completely insulate ferry operators from the fluctuations in fuel prices, which might disincentivise them to properly manage operating costs, and it would go against the established policy that public transport services should be operated in accordance with prudent commercial principles. In addition, this might not help stabilise fares either. As fuel would be consumed directly or indirectly in all trades nowadays, the setting up of a fuel stabilisation fund solely for the ferry industry would have a negative impact on the fairness of the operating environment and lead to extensive knock-on effects. Therefore, the TD did not have any plans to set up such a fund at the present stage.
- (c) The Department has been actively assisting the ferry industry in various aspects, including helping the ferry operators to increase non-fare box revenues. In addition, pier improvement works were carried out to ensure that pier facilities were maintained in good conditions to facilitate the daily operation of the piers and the ferries, as well as to generate more non-fare box revenues.

66. The Chairman said that she would have a discussion with the Chairman of the IDC on the invitation of representatives of the TLB and the TD to meet with Members.

XII. Question on the planning of car parking spaces in the Tung Chung New Development Area
(T&TC Paper No. 13/2024)

67. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 13/2024.

68. Mr LEE Lap-man gave his response as follows:

- (a) The development projects in Tung Chung New Development Area

(including Yue Nga Court) were provided with the required number of car parking spaces with reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.

- (b) Apart from the provision of private car parking spaces for residents in Area 99, Tung Chung, there would be a public car park with 80 private car parking spaces for public use. It was expected that the carpark would be completed in the first half of 2025.
- (c) The TD would continue to keep in view the demand of parking spaces in the area and take appropriate measures to increase the supply of parking spaces where necessary. For instance, additional roadside parking spaces could be provided in locations with parking demand without compromising the smooth flow traffic, road safety and other road users. In accordance with the principle of “single site, multiple use”, the Department would also discuss with the relevant government departments to maximise the provision of parking spaces at suitable Government, Institution and Community sites in the Tung Chung New Town Extension project as far as practicable.
- (d) The Department would continue to liaise with other departments to identify suitable sites as far as practicable, such that carparks under short-term tenancy could be provided to meet local demand.

69. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) An enquiry was raised about the ratio of parking spaces specified in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.
- (b) Although the TD had made reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in providing the required number of parking spaces, there were indeed a shortage of parking spaces in public housing estates, Home Ownership Scheme housing estates and rural areas. Members hoped that the Government would, in parallel with the development of Tung Chung East, formulate short, medium and long term plans for parking spaces, and identify more sites for the construction of car parks or intelligent carparks to solve the problem of insufficient parking spaces in Tung Chung.
- (c) With a significant population growth in Tung Chung in the future, Members were concerned that the problem of insufficient parking spaces would further worsen and considered that the Department should accord priority to resolving the problem.
- (d) There were fewer than 100 parking spaces in Ying Tung Road Carpark. During the morning peak hours when the car park was full, many vehicles would be parked on Ying Tung Road, affecting road traffic and bus services. During holidays, many vehicles were parked at Tat Tung Road as the drivers were waiting to enter the Citygate car park, causing traffic congestion. Members hoped that the Department would provide

additional roadside parking spaces at suitable locations.

- (e) It was suggested that a composite carpark be built next to Tung Chung Cable Car Terminal.
- (f) An enquiry was raised about the year in which the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines were formulated. Members considered that the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines should be up-to-date, and different standards and guidelines should be implemented in different districts.
- (g) There were insufficient charging facilities for electric vehicles.

70. Mr LEE Lap-man gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) When the Government set out its policies on the provision of parking spaces, priority would be given to consider and cater for the parking needs of commercial vehicles, subsequent to which an adequate amount of parking spaces for private vehicles would be provided. Subject to Hong Kong's overall traffic conditions, the TD encouraged the public to use public transport as far as possible, so as not to add to the burden of road traffic.
- (b) In 2021, the proportion of parking spaces in public housing estates (including subsidised housing estates) was increased. At present, new developments in the Tung Chung New Development Area are provided with the required number of parking spaces in accordance with the new standards and guidelines.
- (c) The Department would consider identifying suitable locations throughout the Tung Chung area for the provision of additional parking spaces, including the provision of suitable roadside parking spaces without affecting road users.
- (d) As regards the setting up of different standards and guidelines for the planning of different districts, the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines which were currently applicable to all districts in the territory, would also provide an appropriate number of parking spaces having regard to the different factors of the districts and the developments, and the Department would reflect the relevant views to the relevant sections when necessary.
- (e) The Department would maintain close liaison with the Environmental Protection Department on the charging facilities for electric vehicles.

71. The Chairman suggested that the TD should issue a consultation paper to collect Members' views on the parking spaces in Tung Chung. In this way, the Department could consider their proposals on the locations where additional carparks and roadside parking spaces should be set up. Where necessary, the Department could have a further discussion with Members.

(Post-meeting note: On 13 March this year, the Secretariat issued the above consultation paper to Members.)

XIII. Question on the cycle parking space arrangement in the course of the Improvement Works at Yung Shue Wan Public Pier
(T&TC Paper No. 12/2024)

72. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 12/2024 and the written reply from the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD).

73. Mr Tim WONG said that to tackle the problem of illegal parking of bicycles more effectively, the IsDO would collaborate with the departments concerned in the light of the circumstances to clear the bicycles at the parking blackspots. During the joint operation on 30 January this year, the TD was responsible for temporarily closure of the bicycle parking area at Yung Shue Wan Public Pier on Lamma Island in accordance with the relevant Ordinance to tie in with the bicycle clearance operation. In addition, the Department also issued a notice in advance to inform the public of the relevant arrangement.

74. Mr Thomas LI said that if illegally-parked bicycles had to be cleared in future joint operations during the improvement works for Yung Shue Wan Public Pier, the Department would make arrangements in accordance with the prevailing circumstances and take into account Members' views.

75. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) It was hoped that the department would maintain good communication with Members prior to the joint operations.
- (b) As there were insufficient bicycle parking spaces in the vicinity of Yung Shue Wan Public Pier, many residents would park their bicycles on the Main Street. Members hoped that the Department would try to solve the above problem.

76. Mr Tim WONG said that the existing area of the footbridge was not a legal bicycle parking space. As regards issues arising from the CEDD's improvement works at the pier, the TD would relay Members' views to the department concerned for further review.

77. Members said that the root cause for the illegal parking of bicycles was an insufficient number of bicycle parking spaces. While it was mentioned in the CEDD's written reply that around 100 additional bicycle parking spaces would be provided at the reconstructed footbridge, Members suggested that the Department should make use of the vacant site outside the post office or identify suitable sites as temporary bicycle parking spaces, so as to alleviate the problem of insufficient bicycle parking spaces during the construction period.

78. Mrs Kitty RADFORD said that the Lands Department would explore with

the TD the feasibility of the conversion of the site proposed by Members into a temporary bicycle parking space.

XIV. Question on the opening of the vehicular access between Sok Kwu Wan and Yung Shue Wan on Lamma Island for use by village vehicles
(T&TC Paper No. 4/2024)

79. The Chairman referred to T&TC Paper No. 4/2024.

80. Mr Tim WONG gave his response as follows:

- (a) According to records, a working group comprising the representatives of the TD, the IsDO, the Police, the District Lands Office, Islands and the then Regional Services Department had conducted a review on the conditions for the licensing and renewal of licences for village vehicles and the relevant operation conditions in Cheung Chau, Lamma Island, Peng Chau and Lantau Island. The findings of the review were presented to the Traffic and Transport Committee of the IDC at its meeting in June 2002 for discussion and consultation with members.
- (b) The review covered the permitted areas of use of village vehicles on Lamma Island. As the access road connecting northern and southern Lamma Island was mainly a narrow hiking trails and it was anticipated that there might be an increase in the number of vehicles on southern Lamma Island, the working group considered it inappropriate to permit village vehicles to use the section of the access road on safety reasons. It was suggested by the working group that Hung Shing Yeh Beach should be specified as the boundary for village vehicles on northern Lamma Island, whereas Lo So Shing Beach should be specified as a boundary for those on southern Lamma Island.
- (c) If the holders of a village vehicle permit needed to use village vehicles for travelling between northern and southern Lamma Island for works or business purposes, the permit holder concerned might file an application to the TD. When the Department scrutinised the application, it would carefully consider the practical needs of the applicant; the impact posed on other road users and the comments of other departments.
- (d) In response to Members' concern about the captioned issue, the Department had recently deployed its staff to conduct a site inspection. It was found that there were many hikers along the road section concerned and some sections of the road were only 1.5 metres wide with slopes along the roadside. If a large number of village vehicles passed through the road section at the same time, it might pose danger to road users. The Department considered that the existing arrangement had already balanced both road safety and local needs, and maintaining the status quo was considered the most appropriate.

81. Members expressed their views as follows:

- (a) Not many village vehicles would use the access road for travelling between Sok Kwu Wan and Yung Shue Wan on weekdays, and village vehicles would only pass through the access road where necessary. Besides, not many visitors go hiking on Lamma Island on weekdays except on holidays.
- (b) The TD's existing arrangement had hindered the traffic flow and development in the southern and northern parts of Lamma Island. As a number of small village houses were being constructed on southern Lamma Island, construction materials and tools had to be delivered from the north to the sites by village vehicles. However, at present, such materials could only be delivered to Lo Tik Wan by road transport before having them delivered to Sok Kwu Wan by sea, resulting in an increase of construction cost by around 30% and a heavier burden for the villagers. Furthermore, many residents on southern and northern Lamma Island had to deliver essential resources to each other. Should there be a burst of water pipes or a power failure in the villages on southern Lamma Island, it was likely that eligible technicians living on northern Lamma Island be deployed to the scene for urgent repair and assistance. As a result, it was of paramount importance that the above access road be fully opened to the residents of Lamma Island.
- (c) Concerns were raised about the TD's refusal to fully open the access road on safety grounds. Members enquired about the statistics on the number of traffic accidents at the scene in the past and the causes of the accidents.
- (d) There was a strong request for the Department to fully open the access road to village vehicles. It was hoped that the Department would conduct site inspections at the sections deemed unsafe with Members and carry out road improvement works, thereby enhancing road safety to fully open the access road.
- (e) It was suggested that the Department should fully open the access road on weekdays and stop village vehicles from using the access road on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays or during other designated periods, with a view to striking a balance between minimising the impact on hikers and providing convenience to Lamma Island residents.
- (f) It was suggested that the Department should put in place a trial run on fully opening the access road for three to six months and review it afterwards.
- (g) It was suggested that the Department should set up additional traffic signs on the relevant sections to remind hikers that the road sections had been opened to village vehicles, and they should pay extra attention to road safety.

82. Mr Tim WONG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) While imposing traffic restrictions on the above roads, the TD would, in accordance with the established mechanism, vet and approve applications from vehicles (including those of government departments and organisations) travelling between northern and southern Lamma Island in order to provide public services to the residents.
- (b) The Department was open to the suggestion on revising the restrictions on the use of village vehicles along the access road implemented in 2002, on the premise that the road conditions of the access road concerned could be improved, such that village vehicles could pass through it safely. Nevertheless, it was revealed by the Department in a recent site inspection that pedestrians were required to move to the side of the access road for shelter when village vehicles passed through. Therefore, the Department considered that traffic restrictions should continue to be implemented to balance the needs of different parties.
- (c) The Department noted the proposals by Members on opening the access road to village vehicles during designated hours and carrying out improvement works at the road sections concerned. The Department would arrange a site visit with Members after the meeting and explore the feasibility of the proposals.

83. The Chairman asked the TD to arrange for a site visit as soon as possible.

XV. Highways Department's Minor Traffic Improvement Projects and Works Schedules

84. The Chairman advised that the Minor Traffic Improvement Projects and Works Schedules for Islands District as at the end of January this year had been submitted by the Highways Department prior to the meeting, and Members were welcomed to make enquiries and comments.

85. Members noted the contents of the paper concerned.

XVI. Date of next meeting

86. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m. The next meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on 15 April 2024 (Monday).

-END-