

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

THB(T)049

Question Serial No.

2575

Head: 60 - Highways Department Subhead 000 Operational
(No. & title): Expenses

Programme: (3) Railway Development

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

It is mentioned in paragraph 21 that the Highways Department will “facilitate further planning of the Northern Link”. With regard to the above, please provide information on:

- (a) the estimated expenditure of the above project;
- (b) the number of jobs to be created by the above project for professional staff, technical staff and labourers;
- (c) the completion date of further planning;
- (d) the expected completion date of the project; and
- (e) the number of consultations with local organizations and residents.

Asked by: Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply:

The current proposal of the Northern Link (NOL) is a railway line connecting the existing Kam Sheung Road Station of the West Rail Line to the Lok Ma Chau Station at the boundary, with a station at Chau Tau for interchanging with the Spur Line. It will therefore link the West Rail Line and the East Rail Line in the north of the New Territories, and will provide cross boundary rail service for the Northwest New Territories.

The planning of the NOL has to take into consideration the findings of the planning and engineering study of the New Territories New Development Areas (NDAs), which is currently being undertaken by the Planning Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department. The study, which will address issues related to the overall planning of the NDAs, the development programme, the planned population and employment in the planning areas, is expected to be completed in mid 2011. We will then review the NOL project including the proposed alignment, station locations and implementation timetable.

Specifically on the information requested -

- (a) & (b) The estimated expenditure for the NOL and the number of jobs to be created under the NOL can only be worked out upon completion of the review of the NOL.

- (c) & (d) We will revisit the planning parameters and project assumptions for the NOL upon receiving the findings of the planning and engineering study of the NDAs in mid 2011. We will continue to review the railway scheme, including the proposed alignment, station locations, design, cost and the implementation programme of the NOL.
- (e) We have been maintaining liaison with concerned District Councils since 2007 and provided them with progress of the project from time to time. We will continue to liaise with and consult the relevant stakeholders and local bodies and local residents during the course of our review. We will plan the public consultation exercise when we have worked out more information on the NOL.

Signature _____

Name in block letters WAI CHI SING

Post Title Director of Highways

Date 17.3.2010