Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2011-12

## CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

Question Serial No.

**THB(T)044** 

0009

Head:60 - Highways DepartmentSubhead<br/>(No. & title):000 Operational<br/>Expenses

<u>Programme</u>: (3) Railway Development

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

With respect to taking forward the planning of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL), will the Administration inform this Committee of the latest progress of the planning of the WEL, the earliest estimated time to begin formal consultation and planning procedures, the estimated commencement date and completion date, as well as the expenditure and manpower involved for the planning of the WEL so far?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The proposed Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL) is intended to be a multifunction cross-boundary railway. It will provide cross-boundary passengers with environmentally friendly and efficient railway services between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. It will also facilitate the development of the Northwest New Territories (NWNT) and Qianhai in Shenzhen. Through this railway project, we would also like to facilitate the cooperation between the two airports in Hong Kong and Shenzhen which may result in a win-win situation.

Preliminary studies on the WEL have confirmed its technical feasibility. It is important, however, for the design of the WEL to take into consideration of the development of Qianhai and NWNT. We expect more and more planning parameters for these areas will be available soon.

With the funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, the Highways Department will commission a consultancy study to review and update the Railway Development Strategy 2000. The review is expected to start in the second quarter of 2011. It will investigate, amongst other railway proposals, the functionality, preliminary alignment options and patronage forecast of the WEL, taking into consideration latest transport planning parameters, cross-boundary passenger demand and air-related passenger demand, land use and development, etc. When we have findings from the consultancy study, we will consult the public, inviting the community to express views on the development of WEL.

We have jointly studied with the Shenzhen authorities on the preliminary planning of the proposed WEL to facilitate the cooperation of the two airports. We also have carried out another preliminary engineering study on the Hong Kong section. Since the financial year of 2008-09, we have deployed a total of around \$23 million for these two separate studies. The manpower involved in taking forward the studies was absorbed by internal redeployment and hence there was no additional manpower.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters K K LAU

Post Title Director of Highways

Date \_\_\_\_\_18.3.2011