

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

**THB(T)072**

Question Serial No.

1432

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

Programme:                    (3) Railway Development

Controlling Officer:      Director of Highways

Director of Bureau:      Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the co-ordination with the Mainland authorities on cross-boundary infrastructure developments mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2011-12, please advise:

- a. What cross-boundary infrastructures are being studied, reviewed or conceptualised by the government at present? Please provide information about the expenditure and manpower involved.
- b. Has the government formed any working organisation or team to discuss with the Mainland authorities matters concerning co-ordination in the past five years (i.e. 2006-07 to 2010-11)? If yes, please provide details, membership list, selection criteria of members, and the expenditure and manpower involved.
- c. Were any meetings held between the organisation/team and the Mainland authorities? If yes, please provide details about the meetings and the attendance rate of members; if not, please explain how the government co-ordinate with the Mainland authorities; and
- d. The current progress, expenditure and manpower involved in the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line project.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply:

The Hong Kong Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL) is the only cross-boundary railway project under study.

A Task Force, jointly led by the Vice Mayor of Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and Secretary for Transport and Housing of HKSARG, has been set up to steer the study of this possible cross-boundary railway project. Membership of the Task Force consisted of representatives from various bureaux and departments of both governments. Since the setting up of the Task Force in 2008, meetings were held from time to time on a need basis to look into the role, function and technical feasibility of the rail project. As the meetings have been attended by existing officers of the relevant bureaux and departments, no additional manpower is deployed for the purpose.

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WEL is intended to be a multi-function 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 feasibility studies on the WEL have confirmed its technical feasibility. As one of the major functions of the WEL is to promote the development of Qianhai and NWNT, it is important for the design of the WEL to take into consideration the planning of these two areas. Whereas the planning of Qianhai and the Community Engagement for Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area in NWNT are in progress, 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 in January 2011, 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 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.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ K K LAU

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Director of Highways

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 18.3.2011