

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)033

(Question Serial No. 0929)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Railway Development
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Jimmy P M CHAN)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Under Programme (3) Railway Development in the 2019-20 Budget, the Government mentioned that it will continue to take forward the proposed railway schemes recommended under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014) in an orderly manner, including carrying on with the detailed planning for the Tuen Mun South Extension, the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), the East Kowloon Line (EKL), the Tung Chung West Extension (and Tung Chung East Station) and the North Island Line. Will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) What is the specific timetable for commencing the detailed planning for the EKL? What is the anticipated time for commencement of the consultation exercise?
- (2) What are the expenditures and staff establishment involved, as well as their duties?

Asked by: Hon OR Chong-shing, Wilson (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

- (1) Having regard to the indicative implementation window recommended in the RDS-2014, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) had invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit a proposal for the implementation of the EKL. MTRCL submitted a proposal for EKL to the Government in end July 2017. THB, the Highways Department and relevant bureaux/departments have evaluated the proposal and requested MTRCL to provide additional information and supplement details. In carrying out the evaluation, our main focus is to ensure that the proposal is practically feasible and can bring maximum benefits to the community. Due to the tight housing supply and the potential housing supply that may be brought about by railway development, the Government is also reviewing the proposal submitted by MTRCL in this light.

Railway projects involve huge capital investment, and the Government has to plan in a prudent manner. The new railway projects proposed in the RDS-2014, including the EKL, have different degrees of complexities. As clearly stated in the RDS-2014, the taking forward of individual proposed railway projects set out in the Strategy will be

subject to the outcome of detailed engineering, environmental and financial studies relating to each project, as well as updated demand assessment and availability of resources. Moreover, for railway projects which are mainly intended to complement new development areas and new housing developments, the implementation timetable for the development areas and new housing developments in question will be an important planning parameter for the railway projects. Therefore, the indicative implementation windows recommended in the RDS-2014 may be adjusted having regard to any change in circumstances.

In line with established procedures, prior to the finalisation of any new railway scheme, we will consult the public, including the Legislative Council and the relevant District Councils, on the details of the scheme.

- (2) As at March 2019, 0.5 Chief Engineer, one Senior Engineer and one Engineer in the HyD are tasked with assisting the THB in studying the EKL, with a total estimated staff cost of about \$3 million in 2019-20.

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