

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)042

(Question Serial No. 2425)

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:

Regarding the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) project, please advise this Committee of the following -

- (1) Has the Government conducted internal investigations against officers of the Highways Department (HyD) responsible for the project (including the current and former Director of Highways, Deputy Director of Highways, Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development and the HyD's officers tasked with works supervision) in relation to the cost overrun of the XRL project? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
- (2) Will the Government consider asking the Civil Service Bureau to undertake disciplinary proceedings against the officers involved as mentioned in Part (1)?
- (3) The current positions or situations at work of the HyD's officers who have been responsible for handling the XRL project since its commencement in 2010.

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

The Hong Kong Section of XRL project was entrusted to the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) for design, construction and commissioning. The MTRCL has undertaken the role of project manager for the procurement, administration and supervision of the design and construction of the works. The supervision of MTRCL's work for XRL is undertaken by the HyD through deployment of in-house staff resources, with the assistance of its Monitoring and Verification Consultant engaged.

The main reasons leading to cost overrun of the XRL project include unfavourable ground conditions encountered, disruption due to other causes, changes in design to suit actual site conditions and various unforeseen circumstances, price escalations, additional project management cost and insurance, contingency for the remaining works, and additional government cost.

In the light of the public concerns on the project delay and cost overrun of the XRL project, the Chief Executive appointed in May 2014 an Independent Expert Panel (IEP) chaired by

the former Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Justice Michael Hartmann, to review the implementation of the XRL project. The report of the IEP, which was released by the Government in January 2015, put forward recommendations to improve the monitoring work by the HyD on the XRL project.

The HyD had implemented improvement measures since mid-2014 to enhance the monitoring of the project which was finally commissioned in September 2018.

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