

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**THB(T)280**

**(Question Serial No. 3601)**

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 East Kowloon Line (EKL), please inform this Committee of the following -

- (1) Whether the Government has completed examining the proposal submitted by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) in July 2017? What are the differences between the proposed alignment of the EKL and that mentioned in the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014)? As anticipated by the Government, what are the timings for consulting the public on the railway alignment and commencing the detailed design work of the project with a view to achieving the target of commencing the railway project by 2025?
- (2) What are the work, expenditure and manpower involved for the EKL project as anticipated by the Highways Department (HyD) in 2019-20?

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (LegCo internal reference no.: 55)

Reply:

- (1) Having regard to the indicative implementation window recommended in the RDS-2014, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) had invited the 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, HyD 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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