

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)021

(Question Serial No. 2858)

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 work of overseeing the construction progress of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) What are the additional expenditures in detail (e.g. departmental expenses and fees for the monitoring and verification consultant) and the staff establishment involved annually?
- (b) Has the Government collected the latest loading of the Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 after its commissioning? What is the ratio to its maximum carrying capacity? If so, what are the details?
- (c) Has the Government assessed the diversion effect of the Tuen Ma Line on the passenger flow between New Territories East and urban Kowloon (e.g. the impact on westbound/eastbound traffic of the East Rail Line and Kwun Tong Line)? If so, what are the details?
- (d) The full commissioning of the Tuen Ma Line will take time as the structural works safety of Hung Hom Station extension is pending comprehensive assessment. On the premise of ensuring safety of the station, will the Government consider the possibility of partial commissioning of other stations of the Tuen Ma Line? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon HO Kai-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

- (a)
The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for the monitoring and verification (M&V) of the works of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) in implementing the SCL project. As at March 2020, there are one Government Engineer, three Chief Engineers, 11 Senior Engineers, 19 Engineers and one Assistant Engineer in the Railway Development Office of HyD assisting one Principal Government Engineer in taking forward the SCL project. As they are existing staff resources of HyD and are also responsible for other projects, there is

no separate breakdown of expenditure for SCL. HyD has employed consultants to assist in M&V works. In 2019-20, the expenditure was about \$27.7 million.

(b) and (c)

Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 (TML1), i.e. extending the existing Ma On Shan Line to three new stations, namely Hin Keng, Diamond Hill and Kai Tak stations, was commissioned on 14 February 2020. The travelling time between Tai Wai Station and Diamond Hill Station has been substantially reduced from 17 minutes to around nine minutes, providing passengers of the East Rail Line (EAL) and Ma On Shan Line an alternative to access the urban districts. The commissioning of TML1 facilitates passengers to travel along the stations in Ma On Shan areas and East Kowloon more efficiently and conveniently, as well as diverts part of the EAL passengers destined to East Kowloon and Hong Kong Island East, contributing to relieving the most congested section of EAL from Tai Wai to Kowloon Tong stations.

Upon the commissioning of TML1, as at 13 March 2020, the average daily patronage using the new Hin Keng Station and Kai Tak Station was about 38 000; and about 5 000 passengers interchanged from TML1 to Kwun Tong Line at Diamond Hill Station during peak hours. In view of the short period of TML1 since its commissioning, we will continue to observe the change of the travelling patterns of passengers, in particular the travelling mode of passengers plying between New Territories East and East Kowloon or Hong Kong Island East. In addition, as the passengers' travelling patterns have been affected by the recent novel coronavirus outbreak, more time is needed to assess the diversion effect and occupancy rate of TML1 trains.

(d)

Regarding the phased commissioning of Tuen Ma Line, the Government and MTRCL had explored feasibility of various options in order to provide the most convenient railway services to the public. While it has been our prime concern to commission as many stations in the partial commissioning scheme, not all stations enable trains to turnaround to provide a loop service. Between Tai Wai and Hung Hom, trains can turnaround at Kai Tak Station via the crossover track somewhere between Diamond Hill Station and Kai Tak Station. The other stations, including To Kwa Wan and Sung Wong Toi, have no turnaround tracks and therefore cannot serve as temporary terminal stations. The commissioning scheme of TML1 was developed having regard to a host of factors including train safety, railway operation, customer services and the impact on the full commissioning of Tuen Ma Line in the future. We will strive to complete the remaining works for the full commissioning of the Tuen Ma Line by the end of 2021.

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