

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

TLB026

(Question Serial No. 1948)

Head: (60) Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Railway Development

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

The Highways Department established the Northern Metropolis Railways Office (NMRO) to assist in the implementation of railway projects related to the Northern Metropolis. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

1. What are the details of the work undertaken by the NMRO in 2025-26?
2. What are the details of the work anticipated to be undertaken by the NMRO and the implementation timetable of the railway projects in 2026-27?
3. What are the differences and similarities in the functions and the division of work between the NMRO and the other government departments that supervise the railway projects?
4. Please list by rank the numbers of permanent posts and supernumerary posts, and the respective salary expenditures involved for the NMRO and the other government departments that supervise the railway projects.

Rank	No. of permanent posts	Salary Expenditures	No. of supernumerary posts	Salary Expenditures
Directorate				
Professional Grade				
Technical Grade				
General Grade				

5. What is the implementation timetable for the establishment of the Railways Department?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Siu-hung (LegCo internal reference no.: 44)

Reply:

1. and 2. In 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Northern Metropolis Railways Office (NMRO) is mainly responsible for the coordination and implementation of railway projects related to the Northern Metropolis, including Kwu Tung Station, Hung Shui Kiu Station, Northern Link (NOL) project and the Hong Kong section of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link (Hung Shui Kiu - Qianhai)(HSWRL).

The construction of the Kwu Tung Station and the Hung Shui Kiu Station of Tuen Ma Line is currently underway, with completion anticipated in 2027 and 2030 respectively. Also, the Government and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) executed the part 1 of the project agreement of the NOL project, with a view to implementing NOL Main Line and NOL Spur Line as one project under a new mindset and striving for commissioning of both lines together by 2034 or earlier. Meanwhile, the Government vigorously implements the HSWRL. Relevant contractors and operators were previously invited to submit expressions of interest for the Hong Kong section of the HSWRL. The market response was positive, with over 80 expressions of interest received. The Government is currently taking forward the investigation and design works in parallel, with the target of having the Hong Kong section of the HSWRL technically ready for tendering in 2027, followed immediately by detailed design and construction works. The Government strives to complete the construction works in 2034, followed immediately by integrated testing and commissioning to realise the common goal of the two governments to commission the HSWRL in 2035.

3. The development of new railway projects involves both the Highways Department (HyD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). The Railway Development Office (RDO) and the NMRO under the HyD are responsible for planning Hong Kong's railway development and overseeing the implementation of new railway projects. Specifically, the RDO is responsible for carrying out studies and formulating plans for the future development of Hong Kong railway network, and to coordinate and implement other railway projects outside the Northern Metropolis. The NMRO is responsible for coordinating and implementing the railway projects related to the Northern Metropolis. In addition, the Railways Branch under the EMSD is responsible for regulating and monitoring the safe operation of railway systems in accordance with relevant railway safety ordinances.
4. Under the HyD's Head of Expenditure (i.e. Head 60), the manpower establishments and salary expenditures of the NMRO and the RDO as at 1 March 2026 are tabulated below:

Grade	No. of Permanent posts	Salary expenditures (\$ million)^[Note]	No. of time-limited posts	Salary expenditures (\$ million)^[Note]
Northern Metropolis Railways Office				
Directorate	1	2.10	3	7.10
Professional	26	31.50	22	24.90

Grade	No. of Permanent posts	Salary expenditures (\$ million)^[Note]	No. of time-limited posts	Salary expenditures (\$ million)^[Note]
Technical	4	2.40	-	-
General	1	0.30	2	0.80
Railway Development Office				
Directorate	6	14.10	-	-
Professional	69	81.20	24	27.50
Technical	27	15.30	-	-
General	30	14.50	1	1.60

Note in terms of notional annual mid-point salary value.

Under the EMSD's Head of Expenditure (i.e. Head 42), the manpower establishments and salary expenditures of the Railways Branch under the EMSD as at 1 March 2026 are tabulated at the table below. The railway systems regulated and monitored by the Railways Branch under the EMSD include railway systems operated by the MTRCL, the Hong Kong International Airport Automated People Mover operated by the Airport Authority Hong Kong, tramway systems operated by the Hong Kong Tramways Limited and peak tramway system operated by the Peak Tramways Company Limited. The EMSD does not maintain breakdown figures for expenditures of new railway projects.

Rank	No. of Permanent posts	Salary expenditures (\$ million)^[Note]	No. of time-limited posts	Salary expenditures (\$ million)^[Note]
Railways Branch				
Directorate	3	6.66	2	4.18
Professional Grade	43	64.73	-	-
Technical Grade	4	4.92	-	-
General Grade	8	2.54	-	-

Note in terms of notional annual mid-point salary value.

- The Government previously proposed establishing a Railways Department to be the dedicated department responsible for railway planning, implementation and safety regulation by integrating the existing NMRO and RDO under the HyD, as well as the Railways Branch under the EMSD. Since the establishment of a new department involves additional recurring manpower and resource requirements, the Government, under the direction of prudent control of operating expenditures, considers it necessary to reconsider the appropriate timing for establishing the Railways Department.

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