

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2333)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

Under Programme (2), the Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for the maintenance of all public roads, including highway structures, government road tunnels, road furniture, road drainage and roadside slopes. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

- (i) In 2025-26, the revised estimate of \$2.5977 billion was \$208.4 million (7.4%) less than the original estimate of \$2.8061 billion. The estimate of \$2.9124 billion for 2026-27 is \$314.7 million (12.1%) more than the revised estimate for 2025-26. What are the reasons for the fluctuation of the revised estimate for this year and the estimate for next year when compared to the original estimate of this year?
- (ii) In 2026-27, the HyD estimated a net reduction of 30 posts under Programme (2) to 1 107 posts. What are the respective grades, posts and salary expenditures involved in the deletion and retention of posts? How can the HyD ensure that sufficient manpower would be available to cope with the needs of road maintenance?
- (iii) Regarding the estimated expenditures in 2026-27, what are the expenditures on salaries, operations and the equipment and materials respectively? What is the ratio of adopting new materials (for example "Highly Modified Stone Mastic Asphalt" HMSMA6 and HMSMA10) in road surfacing materials? and
- (iv) Over the past 3 years and projected for 2026-27, what were the actual maintenance expenditures and the estimates respectively for various government tunnels/bridges ?

Asked by: Hon LAM Wai-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

- (i) The revised estimate for 2025-26 under Programme (2) represents a 7.4% decrease compared to the original estimate, mainly reflects the change in the completion dates of the new road works and relevant projects (including the transport infrastructure of the Diamond Hill Development Area, the retrofitting of lifts under the "Universal

Accessibility” Programme, and the Wan Chai Development Phase II), deferring the handover to the Highways Department (HyD) for maintenance, and a corresponding decrease in the provisions required for workshop services (including electrical and mechanical services, etc.).

The increase in the estimate for 2026-27 mainly reflects the handover of the aforesaid deferred projects and new road works and relevant projects to the HyD for the commencement of maintenance and a corresponding increase in the provision requirements for workshop services.

- (ii) In 2026-27, it is expected that 30 posts will be deleted under Programme (2). Their respective grades, posts and salary expenditures (in terms of notional annual mid-point salary value) are tabulated below:

Grade	Post	No. of Deleted Posts	Salary Expenditures (\$ million)
Technical Grade	Works Supervisor II	17	5.76
General Grade	Clerical Assistant and Personal Secretary II etc.	6	1.63
	Workman II	4	0.80
	Chainman	3	0.79

Besides, 1 107 posts will be retained under Programme (2) in 2026-27. Their respective grades, posts and salary expenditures (in terms of notional annual mid-point salary value) are tabulated below:

Grade	Post	No. of Posts	Salary Expenditures (\$ million)
Professional Grade	Including Government Engineer, Chief Engineer, Senior Engineer, Engineer/Assistant Engineer, Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer, Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/Assistant Electrical and Mechanical Engineer and Land Surveyor/Assistant Land Surveyor	176	196.88
Technical Grade	Including Principal Technical Officer, Senior Technical Officer, Technical Officer/Technical Officer Trainee, Principal Survey Officer, Senior Survey Officer, Survey Officer/Survey Officer Trainee, Chief Technical Officer (Inspector of Works), Senior Inspector of Works, Inspector of Works, Assistant Inspector of Works, Electrical Inspector, Assistant Electrical Inspector, Works	757	380.21

Grade	Post	No. of Posts	Salary Expenditures (\$ million)
	Supervisor I, Works Supervisor II and Tracer		
General Grade	Including Executive Officer I, Executive Officer II, Senior Clerical Officer, Clerical Officer, Assistant Clerical Officer, Clerical Assistant, Office Assistant, Personal Secretary I, Personal Secretary II, Supplies Supervisor I, Supplies Supervisor II, Supplies Assistant, Senior Artisan, Artisan, Chainman, Workman II and Motor Driver etc.	174	54.85

The Government has all along been streamlining manpower by using technologies and simplifying workflows. The HyD proactively uses innovative technologies and digitalise workflows in the maintenance of public roads to enhance efficiency. The Road Maintenance Monitory System (RMMS) is currently used in all road maintenance contracts. The system streamlines paperwork and transmission times, thereby enhancing efficiency and facilitating the HyD engineering personnel to monitor the progress of maintenance works. Besides, the HyD has constantly develop and introduce more durable bituminous materials to improve road surface quality and reduce maintenance frequency which enhancing the durability of road surface and reduce maintenance frequency effectively (see paragraph (iii) below for details).

The HyD will continue to explore innovative technologies and research more durable materials, allowing deploying manpower resources more flexibly and to maintain the standards of public road inspections, maintenance, and management levels amidst appropriate adjustments in financial resources and staff establishments, ensuring a safe and smooth travel condition for the public.

- (iii) The provision involved in Programme (2) in 2026-27 is \$2.9124 billion. The estimated expenditures are as follows:

	Estimate (\$ million)
Personal emoluments and personnel related expenditures	754.2
Departmental expenditures (including maintenance materials, workshop services and general departmental expenses)	374.1
Highways maintenance expenditures	1,679.1
Electricity for public lighting expenditures	105.0

Since 1 April 2025, the HyD has fully adopted “Highly Modified Stone Mastic Asphalt (HMSMA)”, a highly modified bituminous material that has better anti-deformation, anti-aging and anti-fatigue performance than the existing bituminous materials, for road resurfacing at suitable locations. For the repair works of high speed road surfaces, the HyD would adopt Highly Modified Friction Course material, which exhibits high

permeability and can rapidly drain rain water from road surfaces, thus reducing the opportunities of traffic accidents caused by slippery road surfaces. Also, such material can reduce the noise generated while cars rolling over the road surfaces, creating a quieter road environment. The HyD conducts assessments for road sections prior to works and selects appropriate resurfacing materials based on their characteristics (such as traffic flow, degree of wear and tear, road speed limits, and the surrounding environment). The HyD has not set a specific proportion for the use of different new materials for 2026-27.

- (iv) The maintenance expenditures on major government road tunnels in the past 3 years and the estimated maintenance expenditures in 2026-27 under Programme (2) are tabulated below ^{Note1}. The HyD does not maintain a breakdown of maintenance expenditures for other particular structures (including about 1 500 flyovers and bridges and about 1 600 footbridges and subways).

Name of Tunnel	Actual expenditures in 2022-23^{Note2} (\$ million)	Actual expenditures in 2024-25^{Note 2} (\$ million)	Revised estimate in 2025-26^{Note 2} (\$ million)	Estimate in 2026-27^{Note 2} (\$ million)
Lion Rock Tunnel	1.33	0.79	0.93	0.88
Shing Mun Tunnel	0.14	0.19	0.30	0.45
Tseung Kwan O Tunnel	4.07	2.95	0.77	0.77
Tate's Cairn Tunnel	0.47	1.18	1.19	0.55
Science Hill Tunnel	1.52	2.71	7.30	3.81
Airport Tunnel	1.73	0.08	0.33	0.28
Lung Shan Tunnel	0.96	0.73	0.28	0.87
Chueng Shan Tunnel	0.17	0.13	0.16	0.21
Tuen Mun - Chek Lap Kok Tunnel	2.08	1.50	1.97	2.16
Cross Harbour Tunnel	2.31	3.10	3.53	3.50
Western Harbour Tunnel	0.43	2.11	0.69	1.38
Eastern Harbour Crossing	1.00	0.74	0.79	1.14
Aberdeen Tunnel	3.21	3.37	5.28	5.75
Kai Tak Tunnel	1.86	1.32	2.62	1.20
Central-Wan Chai Bypass Tunnel	17.92	6.58	8.50	12.0
Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel ^{Note3}	-	0.34	0.54	0.62

Name of Tunnel	Actual expenditures in 2022-23^{Note 2} (\$ million)	Actual expenditures in 2024-25^{Note 2} (\$ million)	Revised estimate in 2025-26^{Note 2} (\$ million)	Estimate in 2026-27^{Note 2} (\$ million)
Tai Lam Tunnel ^{Note 4}	-	-	0.15	0.17
Central Kowloon Bypass (Yau Ma Tei Section) ^{Note 5}	-	-	0.80	2.00

Note 1: The annual maintenance expenditure fluctuates in connection with the inspection cycles and actual maintenance needs.

Note 2: The expenditures listed in the table only include the maintenance expenses of “highways maintenance” under Programme (2) District and Maintenance Works, and do not include the expenditures on “workshop services” under Programme (2) or the expenditures under Capital Works Programme. In addition, the expenditures listed in the table do not include the management fees paid to the contractors on management, operation and maintenance, the relevant operation and maintenance expenses for the implementation of “HKEToll”, the depreciation expenses of the construction costs of the relevant year, the expenditures on maintenance works of other government departments, etc.

Note 3: The structures and road surfaces of the Tseung Kwan O - Lam Tin Tunnel was handed over to the HyD for maintenance in February 2024.

Note 4: The Tai Lam Tunnel was vested in the Government on 31 May 2025. The HyD is responsible for the maintenance of structure and road surface.

Note 5: Central Kowloon Bypass (Yau Ma Tei Section) was commissioned on 21 December 2025. The HyD is responsible for the maintenance of structure and road surface.

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