

LCQ13: Shatin to Central Link and Kwun Tong Line

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Chi-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

The commissioning date of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL), now under construction, has been postponed due to, among others, works quality problem of the project. It has been reported that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has planned for a partial commissioning of SCL by first opening up train services from Tai Wai Station to Diamond Hill Station, and providing limited train services plying between Diamond Hill Station and To Kwa Wan Station by non-stop trains. On the other hand, the Chief Executive has announced in the 2018 Policy Address that a "Government, Institution or Community" site with an area of about 11 000 square metres in Kwun Tong has been identified for redevelopment to construct a civil service college and other community facilities, and the Government is exploring with MTRCL the feasibility of widening the station platform and/or concourse of Kwun Tong Station, so as to divert the passenger flow from Kwun Tong Station. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the details of MTRCL's plan for partial commissioning of SCL;
- (2) whether it has assessed the impact of partial or full commissioning of SCL on the passenger throughput of the Kwun Tong Line and that of the various railway stations along the Line; if it has assessed, of the outcome;
- (3) as it has been reported that in order to divert excessive passenger flow from some railway stations along the Kwun Tong Line, MTRCL has been running, during the morning peak hours in recent years, empty trains from Tiu Keng Leng Station or Whampoa Station heading directly to Wong Tai Sin Station or Kowloon Tong Station to pick up passengers, whether it knows the details of such arrangement and the other measures currently in place to divert excessive passenger flow from some railway stations along the Kwun Tong Line; whether it knows the measures to be put in place by MTRCL to cope with an additional passenger throughput of the Kwun Tong Line to be generated by SCL upon its partial commissioning;
- (4) of the commissioning dates, based on the latest projection, of the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section and the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section of SCL, as well as the various railway stations of these two Sections; and
- (5) of the new proposals of the Government and MTRCL to divert the passenger flow from Kwun Tong Station; as the Government indicated in reply to my question on 29 November 2017 that the Urban Renewal Authority had put forward

a proposal to MTRCL the construction of a "podium" connecting the Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project with Kwun Tong Station, with a view to providing additional circulation area for the Station, whether it knows the latest progress of the proposal?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the five parts of the Hon Wu Chi-wai's question is as follow:

(1), (2) and (4) The Shatin to Central Link (SCL) is a strategic railway project connecting a number of existing railway lines. The "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" will connect the existing West Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line to form the "Tuen Ma Line"; and the "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" will extend the existing East Rail Line from Hung Hom through the fourth cross harbour railway tunnel to Hong Kong Island (see Annex I). Tuen Ma Line will connect the East Rail Line at Tai Wai Station and Hung Hom Station, and connect Kwun Tong Line at Diamond Hill Station and Ho Man Tin Station. Furthermore, apart from connecting the East Rail Line with Kwun Tong Line at Kowloon Tong Station, its "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" will connect the Island Line, Tsuen Wan Line and South Island Line at Admiralty Station (see Annex II). Tuen Ma Line and the East Rail Line that extends to Hong Kong Island will not only provide more alternative routes to passengers, but also divert the patronage from existing railway lines such as Kwun Tong Line and East Rail Line, which will help enhance the overall carrying capacity of the railway network.

Due to the concerns about the quality of works of Hung Hom Station Extension and the associated investigations since the end of May 2018, the target commissioning date of "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" and "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" will need to be further reviewed in light of the final results of the proposed holistic assessment strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension.

The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) is studying the feasibility and different options for partial commissioning of the East West Corridor of the SCL at the request of the Government. These options should take into account the technical feasibility of opening part of the railway section, the capacity of the railway system, the modification to the signalling system, the compatibility of the road transport, etc. We have no decision made at this moment. In light of the practical feasibility and railway operation safety as first priority, the Government will continue to explore it with MTRCL proactively; and will make decision and public announcement in due course.

(3) The Government and the MTRCL have been closely monitoring the carrying capacity and patronage of various stations and train services along the Kwun Tong Line. The Government has requested the MTRCL to adopt various measures to ease the passenger flow during peak hours. The MTRCL has been implementing various measures, including arranging short-haul trips to run between busy

stations as far as possible during peak hours (for instance during the morning peak hours, some of the trains running along the Kwun Tong Line will not carry passengers after dropping-off at terminal station and go direct to Kowloon Tong Station, Wong Tai Sin Station, Prince Edward Station or Ngau Tau Kok Station to take passengers. Such arrangement has been incorporated into the daily schedule of train services.), improving station facilities and platform management, etc. to ensure the operation of every station of Kwun Tong Line is maintained in a smooth manner.

For Kwun Tong Station, the MTRCL plans to enhance its station facilities by phases. In addition to the installation of additional ticket gates and relocation of some ticket gates at designated exits which was completed in end 2018, the MTRCL is planning for the preliminary works of a large-scale station improvement project in Kwun Tong Station, including the construction of new escalators, re-provisioning of lifts connecting station concourse and platform, etc. Tendering for the preliminary works has commenced and the overall project is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2022.

As regards the impact of partial commissioning of SCL on Kwun Tong Line, the MTRCL has been closely monitoring the operation of various stations along Kwun Tong Line and will study the effect of potential partial commissioning options on the station capacity, passenger flow direction, future improvement to passenger flow etc.

(5) As regards the proposed elevated pedestrian deck connecting the Kwun Tong Station with the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment Project (Development Area 4), the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) has commenced its liaison with the MTRCL with respect to the approved redevelopment master layout plan in the fourth quarter of 2018. The URA has later in the first quarter of 2019 provided the Deck Connection Study Report to the MTRCL for consideration. The URA is closely liaising with the MTRCL and hopes to gazette the relevant roadworks regarding the Pedestrian Deck and the Redevelopment Project in the fourth quarter this year, upon securing the support from the MTRCL and the Kwun Tong District Council. It is believed that the completion of the Pedestrian Deck will provide additional space to the Kwun Tong Station, thereby help diverting passengers to other entrances and exits.

In the long run, to strengthen the pedestrian connectivity within the Kwun Tong district and to ease the pedestrian flow with important facilities nearby, the Government and the URA will carry out preliminary feasibility study of the linkage among the Kwun Tong Station, the redevelopment project of Kwun Tong Town Centre, and the proposed integrated development project nearby. These include the possibility of extending the station concourse or platform of the Kwun Tong Station, in order to further enhance the connectivity of Kwun Tong Town Centre.

LCQ18: Preparation for and follow-up work after the onslaught of typhoons

Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse, and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

In the past two years, super typhoons Hato and Mangkhut successively hit Hong Kong and caused huge damage. For instance, at the low-lying areas by the seaside in Lei Yue Mun and its vicinity, storm surges and huge waves tossed up tonnes of seawater together with silts onto the shore, threatening the lives of shop operators and residents along the shore and causing substantial damage to properties. I and the District Council members of the district concerned have repeatedly called on the authorities to construct flood protection barriers along the shoreline of Lei Yue Mun to guard against typhoons. It is understood that the Tourism Commission is implementing the Lei Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement Project in the district concerned, and the Civil Engineering and Development Department is also conducting a study on the impact of storm surges on the low-lying or exposed coastal areas in Lei Yue Mun and its vicinity as well as in other districts during extreme weather. As both initiatives will take more than a year to complete, they cannot provide a solution to the imminent problems. Moreover, some shop operators and residents who have been victimised twice are worried that in the absence of short-term protective measures, disasters will happen again in this year's typhoon season to the area around the Lei Yue Mun Lighthouse where it is most seriously affected by silts tossed up onto the shore during the onslaught of typhoons in Hong Kong every year. The Observatory has forecast that four to seven typhoons will hit Hong Kong this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the latest progress of the post-Hato and post-Mangkhut clearance work; the manpower and resources involved in such work, including the expenditure on hiring service contractors to carry out the relevant work, with a breakdown by policy bureau/government department;

(2) whether it has assessed, during the onslaught of Mangkhut and Hato in Hong Kong, the volume of silts that was tossed up, in particular through the gap near the Lei Yue Mun Lighthouse, onto the shore by storm surges and then poured into nearby shops and residential premises at Lei Yue Mun waterfront, as well as the amount of economic loss so caused;

(3) whether it has assessed, in the absence of short-term protective measures, the casualties and economic loss that will be caused to the area along the shore at Lei Yue Mun by rainstorms and typhoons this year, and whether last year's disasters will recur; and

(4) as the aforesaid two initiatives will take more than a year to complete, whether the authorities have put in place targeted short-term measures (e.g. some members of the public have proposed the placing of a number of breakwater columns horizontally) to enhance the capability of Lei Yue Mun waterfront (in particular the area around the aforesaid Lei Yue Mun Lighthouse) to withstand rough sea conditions, so as to avoid the recurrence of the disaster of tonnes of silts and rocks pouring into residential premises and shops; if so, of the details; if not, whether they will conduct a study immediately?

Reply:

President,

The geographical position of Hong Kong makes it susceptible to weather-related threats such as tropical cyclone, rainstorm and storm surge. As climate change goes drastic, threats induced by extreme weathers are expected to be more frequent and severe. Therefore, the Government has been strengthening resilience of Hong Kong in various aspects to cope with extreme weather. Earlier on, the Government completed the review on the handling of super typhoons and briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Security at its meeting of May 7, 2019 on the outcome of the review, as well as the Government's preparedness, emergency response and recovery work for future super typhoons. Moreover, on May 30 this year, the Security Bureau held an inter-departmental table-top exercise in the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre at the Central Government Offices. This exercise tested the preparedness, contingency measures and capabilities of relevant bureaux and departments, as well as their decision-making process and interoperability before the onset of typhoon season this year with a view to enhancing relevant bureaux and departments' general awareness and co-ordination in various aspects of contingency handling. All relevant departments also continue to review design and construction standards of infrastructures as well as carry out technical studies to strengthen the resilience of public infrastructure facilities to cope with extreme weather. In addition, they would continue to undertake various protection and mitigation works against storm surges, wave attack and flooding in districts.

As regards the four parts of the question raised by the Hon Tse, the bureau has consulted the views of relevant bureaux and departments and provided below a consolidated response.

(1) The Government has been actively handling the clearance work in the aftermath of super typhoon. According to the information provided by the relevant bureaux, government departments and their service contractors (if any) have co-operated in dealing with the aftermath of Super Typhoon Mangkhut after its passage in Hong Kong last year, details shown in the Annex. As for Super Typhoon Hato which attacked Hong Kong as early as 2017, relevant departments have not archived the information on its post-typhoon clearance work.

(2) to (4) The Government has been concerned about the impact of extreme

weather on low-lying coastal and windy locations (including Lei Yue Mun) and is committed to strengthening the resilience and protection measures in those areas. To this end, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) has commissioned a consultant in this April to undertake a feasibility study entitled "Coastal Hazards under Climate Change and Extreme Weather and Formulation of Improvement Measures". The study aims to conduct a comprehensive review of the low-lying coastal and windy locations (including the seashore of Lei Yue Mun and areas adjacent to its lighthouse), and to carry out relevant investigations on storm surge and wave in order to assess the impacts of extreme weather on the low-lying coastal and windy locations. Based on the outcome of the study, the Government will formulate appropriate protection measures, including improvement works, management measures, and other options, to strengthen the resilience to wave impacts at the coastal areas in the long run.

As to the enhancement measures against wave impacts on the seashore of Lei Yue Mun, after the passage of Super Typhoon Hato in 2017, various government departments joined hands to carry out a series of protective measures in the Lei Yue Mun areas. Among them, the CEDD constructed rock-armoured bunds/gabion walls along the seashore of Lei Yue Mun to relieve wave overtopping the seawalls; the Home Affairs Department built concrete wave walls behind the rock-armoured bunds along an existing footpath to alleviate the influx of wave into the villages; the Drainage Services Department (DSD) deployed emergency response teams for inspections and assistance in clearing drainage facilities, as well as assisted villagers for installation of flood boards and placement of sandbags to reduce the risks of seawater getting into their houses. In addition, in order to enable villagers to better understand the possible increase in sea level before storm surge, the DSD installed water gauges at Lei Yue Mun with indications of the highest water level records (in Chart Datum) of the previous super typhoons on the water gauges, thus increasing the awareness of villagers on flooding prevention.

The above protection measures were substantially completed before the onset of typhoon season in 2018. Therefore, during the passage of Super Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018, despite its recorded maximum wind and maximum water level being higher than those of Hato, the above protection measures greatly alleviated the impacts of Mangkhut on Lei Yue Mun and effectively reduced damage arising from flooding. The villagers of Lei Yue Mun gave compliment on the work by relevant departments and their effectiveness. At present, the CEDD and the Architectural Services Department continue to liaise with the Tourism Commission to explore the feasibility of introducing resilient design against the threats of seawater inundation to the coastal areas, such as an existing observatory platform adjacent to the lighthouse of Lei Yue Mun, under the "Lei Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement Project". About the quantity of sand brought to Lei Yue Mun by the super typhoons and storm surges, as well as the related financial loss, they are hard to quantify and relevant departments have not made such estimates.

Relief and enhancement measures under Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme

The Department of Health (DH) today (June 5) announced that, as a relief measure in the 2019-20 Budget, an additional \$1,000 worth of Elderly Health Care Vouchers will be provided, on a one-off basis, to each eligible elderly person with effect from June 26. The accumulation limit of the vouchers will also be increased to \$8,000 on the same day. It is estimated that the above measures will benefit about 1.3 million elderly people.

The following enhancement measures will also take effect on June 26:

- (a) setting a cap of \$2,000 every two years on the voucher amount that can be spent on optometry services;
- (b) improving the enquiry system for checking voucher balances; and
- (c) regularising the Pilot Scheme at the University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH).

"In January 2019, the annual voucher amount of \$2,000 was released to all eHealth (Subsidies) accounts of elderly people aged 65 or above. With the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2019, an additional one-off \$1,000 worth of vouchers will be deposited into their accounts on June 26," a spokesman for the DH said.

The spokesman added, "In view of the outcome of a review on the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, the DH will also implement several enhancement measures with effect from June 26 to enable eligible elderly people to make better use of their vouchers.

"The accumulation limit of the vouchers will also be raised from \$5,000 to \$8,000 as a regular measure. Persons aged 65 or above in 2019 (i.e. those born in 1954 or before) who have yet to create an eHealth (Subsidies) account on June 26 will receive their entitled voucher amount on the day they create an account, including the additional \$1,000, subject to the accumulation limit of \$8,000.

"Furthermore, a cap of \$2,000 every two years on the voucher amount that can be spent on optometry services will be introduced to encourage elderly people to use the vouchers on different primary healthcare services. For elderly people who are eligible to use vouchers in 2019 (i.e. those born in 1954 or before), the first cycle will run from June 26, 2019, to December 31, 2020 (i.e. the capping amount is still \$2,000 despite the first cycle being less than two years), while the second cycle will run from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2022, and so on. For elderly people born in 1955 or after, the relevant cycle will start to count from January 1 of the year in which they become eligible to use vouchers.

"Elderly people can currently check their voucher balances via the

Scheme's website and Interactive Voice Response System (2838 0511). The services will be improved from June 26 to allow elderly people to also check the amount of vouchers to be disbursed to their accounts on January 1 of the coming year, and the amount of vouchers expected to be forfeited on that day due to the accumulation limit being exceeded. We expect that the new measure can help elderly people more effectively manage and plan for the use of their vouchers.

"To safeguard the rights of elderly people, we suggest that voucher users learn about the service fees and check their voucher balance before using the vouchers to avoid being charged by service providers at a higher rate than non-voucher users.

"In addition, the Government will regularise the Pilot Scheme at HKU-SZH launched in 2015, allowing eligible elderly people to continue to use the vouchers to pay for outpatient services provided by designated departments at HKU-SZH. This will enable Hong Kong elderly people who reside in places near Shenzhen to use primary healthcare services in Shenzhen."

The Scheme aims to subsidise eligible elderly people to use private primary healthcare services. Vouchers are issued and used through an electronic platform. Elderly people do not need to pre-register, collect or carry the vouchers. Elderly people who intend to use the vouchers only need to show to the participating service providers their valid Hong Kong identity card or Certificate of Exemption issued by the Immigration Department, and sign a consent form confirming the voucher amount to be used after receiving healthcare services in person. For elderly people who do not have an eHealth (Subsidies) account, the service providers will create an account for them on the same occasion free of charge.

The DH will later issue letters to notify participating service providers of the details of the above measures, and publicise them to members of the public through different channels. Members of the public may also visit the Scheme's website (www.hcv.gov.hk) or call the enquiry hotline (2838 2311) for relevant information.

[Hong Kong Customs combats illegal import of pharmaceutical products](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (June 4) arrested two directors of a medical diagnostic group suspected of illegally importing pharmaceutical products, in contravention of the Import and Export Ordinance (IEO).

Customs earlier conducted a joint operation with the relevant department and raided two premises of the medical diagnostic group located in Yau Ma Tei

and Kwun Tong. After investigation, Customs officers yesterday arrested a 61-year-old man and a 44-year-old woman.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Under the IE0, import and export of pharmaceutical products not under and in accordance with a licence is an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the IE0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

LCQ10: Policy on private recreational leases

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

The Government conducted a six-month public consultation on the policy on private recreational leases last year, and published the outcome of the consultation in February this year. It was recommended in the consultation paper that the leases currently held respectively by community organisations and private sports clubs be handled separately. For the 39 sites currently granted to community organisations, it was proposed to switch to the handling of them by way of special purpose leases. For the 27 sites granted to private sports clubs, it was proposed that they continue to be handled according to the current arrangements, but the Government would charge the sports clubs, upon renewal of their leases, a land premium of one-third of the full market value (FMV), and require them to open up their facilities further. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific method to be adopted by the Lands Department for calculating the FMV land premiums of the sites currently granted to private sports clubs;

(2) given that the Government proposed in the consultation paper a transitional instalment option for land premium payment by private sports clubs upon renewal of their leases (i.e. 20 per cent of the land premium to be payable immediately upon renewal of leases and the remainder to be paid by five annual instalments, subject to payment of an interest at a fixed rate of 2 per cent per annum above the average best lending rate), whether the

Government has decided to adopt this arrangement; if not, of the alternative arrangements;

(3) in respect of each of the 27 sites granted to private sports clubs, of (i) the total number of hours for which sports and recreation facilities thereat were opened to eligible outside bodies, as well as (ii) the average monthly total hours of sports programmes (which were co-organised with sports organisations and were opened for participation by the public) held thereat, last year (set out in the table below); and

	Name of private sports club	(i)	(ii)
1.	Aberdeen Boat Club		
.....		
27.	Yau Yat Chuen Garden City Club		

(4) as individual private sports clubs have indicated that due to space constraints, they are unable to adjust their positioning and membership policy so that they may be treated as community organisations, and they even need to raise funds by drastically increasing membership fees in order to meet the expenditure on land premiums, which may make them become sports clubs exclusive to only a small number of rich people, whether the Government has assessed if such a situation will arise and what concrete solutions are in place?

Reply:

President,

The Governemnt completed the review on the policy on Private Recreational Leases (PRLs) and published the outcome of the public consultation in February 2019. Submissions received during the public consultation are in general supportive to the following recommendations of the policy review:

(a) handling the leases held by "community organisations" and "private sports clubs" differently and granting new special purpose leases (instead of PRLs) to sports and recreational sites held by "community organisations";

(b) continuing to handle the sites held by private sports clubs under the PRL policy but the lease conditions must be significantly modified to better meet the dual needs of supporting sports development and optimising land use;

(c) taking into account the contribution of private sports clubs in promoting sports development in Hong Kong when considering renewal of their leases upon expiry;

- (d) charging private sports clubs suitable for lease renewal one-third of the full market value (FMV) land premium;
- (e) requiring private sports clubs to open up 30 per cent of the total sports capacity of their sports and recreational facilities to eligible outside bodies and partner with sports organisations to organise sports programmes that are open for enrolment by individual members of the public with a minimum sports programme hours of 240 per month;
- (f) drawing up a list of allowable sports supporting facilities and ancillary facilities for PRLs;
- (g) enhancing the monitoring of PRLs and corporate governance of the lessees; and
- (h) defining the principles in approving applications for new sites for sports and recreational use.

The Government will handle the leases which have expired or will soon expire according to these recommendations. The reply to the four parts of the question is as follows:

(1) In estimating the FMV land premium of PRL sites, the Lands Department will in general base on the value of a site without any building taking into account the land usage and terms and conditions of the land grant or lease renewal (e.g. not allowing non-members' use of food and beverage facilities and the need to open up sports and recreation facilities to eligible outside bodies). The Government will follow up with private sports clubs on details of the principles for estimating land premium.

(2) To allow more time for private sports clubs to plan and prepare for payment of land premium, the Government proposed in the policy review that a transitional instalment option will be made available to those suitable for lease renewal with their leases expiring between 2026 and 2027 (Note). Under this option, a private sports club has to pay 20 per cent of the land premium upfront upon lease renewal, and settle the rest of the land premium by five annual instalments (payable in arrears) subject to payment of interest at a fixed rate of 2 per cent per annum above the average best lending rate of the three note-issuing banks. In view of the concerns over the arrangement of land premium payment expressed during the public consultation, the Government will explore the feasibility of modifying the prevailing instalment option.

(3) The total number of hours of sports and recreational facilities opened up by private sports clubs to eligible outside bodies in 2018 are at Annex. Besides, it is a new policy that private sports clubs are required to partner with sports organisations to organise sports programmes open for public enrolment. To take forward the policy, the Government will include relevant lease conditions upon renewal of leases with private sports clubs in future and require the clubs to report the details of such sports programmes organised in the quarterly reports. We do not possess information on the sports programmes co-organised last year by private sports clubs and sports

organisations for public enrolment.

(4) The Government expects private sports clubs to make greater and more comprehensive contribution to sports development in Hong Kong, which include opening up their sports and recreational facilities for use by non-members. For private sports clubs which cannot afford or do not wish to pay concessionary land premium but still wish to continue operation, they may consider switching to a "quasi-public" operation mode (e.g. adopting an open membership policy, providing sports and recreational facilities for use by members of the public at a low fee). If the Government is satisfied that the private sports club concerned is operating in a "quasi-public" nature, consideration may be given to the adoption of the lease arrangements applicable for "community organisations" upon expiry of the current lease of the club and granting it a special purpose lease with nominal land premium subject to the approval of the Chief Executive in Council. If any private sports club wishes to seek renewal upon expiry of the current lease, it has to prove its contribution towards sports development of Hong Kong. It has to meet the requirement of further opening up of its facilities for public use apart from paying the concessionary land premium.

Note: Including 20 PRLs which were granted renewal for 15 years up to 2026 to 2027 in 2011 to 2012. As for the six PRLs expiring between 2014 and 2024, if they are considered suitable for lease renewal, the Government will renew their PRLs up to June 30, 2027 on nominal premium. The instalment option is not applicable to the remaining one PRL which will expire in 2056.