

Government's response to MTRCL's progress on holistic assessment strategy and verification works for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project

Regarding the progress on the holistic assessment strategy and the verification works for the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) Project announced by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) today (December 24), a spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) responded as follows:

The Government noted that the MTRCL was continuing with its work of the second stage of the holistic assessment strategy and would consolidate test results found in the first two stages and proceed to the third stage as soon as possible to conduct a detailed structural analysis on the works for the Hung Hom Station Extension so as to ascertain if the overall condition of the works is acceptable and determine if it is necessary to conduct strengthening works.

We noted that the MTRCL was gravely concerned and disappointed over the works quality of the main contractor, Leighton Contractors (Asia) Limited (Leighton), considering the deviations of the first batch of coupler connections opened up from the installation requirements specified by the coupler's supplier. According to the Entrustment Agreement signed between the MTRCL and the Government for taking forward the SCL Project, the MTRCL was entrusted by the Government as the project manager to design, construct and commissioning the SCL Project. The MTRCL shall warrant that the entrusted works shall achieve a professional and reasonable level of skill and supervision, including the assurance of quality of works up to the required standards. At the same time, according to the Entrustment Agreement, contractors, including Leighton, having entered into contracts with the MTRCL for the works relating to the SCL Project, have also entered into collateral deeds with the Government. The collateral deed mainly stipulates the legal liabilities and rights between the Government and the contractors in the event of contractors breaching the provisions in works contracts. Subject to the inspection results of the Hung Hom Station Extension works, the Government reserves all the rights to pursue further actions against the MTRCL and the related contractors.

Regarding the installation requirements of a coupler, the Government reiterates that, according to the information from the couplers' supplier, proper installation requirements of a coupler are:

- (1) there shall be a maximum of two full threads exposed; and

(2) the embedded length of the threaded steel bar inside the coupler shall be at least 40 millimetres.

The MTRCL uses the phased array ultrasonic examination to verify the embedded length of the threaded steel bar inside the coupler. As the allowable measurement tolerance of the test is 3 millimetres, equipment readings below 37 millimetres are regarded as failing to meet the installation requirements. The Government considers that in the Hung Hom Station Extension works under the SCL Project, the Contractor should install couplers in accordance with the above requirements.

The MTRCL stated today that workmanship and structural safety are two different concepts, and quoted the information from the coupler supplier to explain that the provision of six full threads of coupler connections could provide the design strength.

The Government considers that when conducting the structural analysis under the third stage of the holistic assessment, the MTRCL should use the information obtained from the first two stages such as as-constructed details of the platforms and quality of works, and take into account the technical data provided by the coupler supplier, so as to ascertain the structural safety of the platforms and determine if it is necessary to conduct strengthening works. Throughout the process, the relevant Government departments will carry out stringent checking.