

LCQ19: Trial operations of Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Che-cheung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

Some residents near the alignment of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) in Yuen Long District have relayed that since the commencement of XRL trial operations by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), they feel vibrations and noise whenever XRL trains pass by. They also suspect that the cracks which have appeared on the floor and walls inside and outside their residential units recently might have been caused by such vibrations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows if the MTRCL had, before carrying out the XRL trial operations, made projections of the vibrations and noise which would be generated as well as the damages which would be caused to nearby buildings by XRL trains in motion, and devised solutions accordingly; if the MTRCL had, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the number of complaints about the XRL trial operations received by the Government and the MTRCL so far, with a breakdown by type of complaints and district involved; the means and timetable for handling such complaints; whether they will offer compensation to the affected residents;

(3) whether a mechanism is currently in place for tackling immediately the problems relating to such complaints; if so, of the details; and

(4) how it ensures that such complaints will be satisfactorily resolved before the commissioning of XRL?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the Hon Leung Che-cheung's question is as follows:

To complement the commissioning target of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) in September 2018, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) commenced trial operations from April 1, 2018 so as to ensure safety and reliability of various systems, as well as to train staff to familiarise themselves with the various operation systems and

operating environment through the simulation of actual operating environment that further tests train operations and relevant station systems.

Before the commencement of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL project, the MTRCL conducted an Environmental Impact Assessment Study for the works in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap 499). The assessment results indicate that the impact of the vibrations and noise created by movement of the high speed trains on the environment and structures in the vicinity are minimal. During trial operations, the MTRCL also monitored and collected data of the vibrations and noise at locations along the alignment as approved by the Environmental Protection Department. Monitoring data from April 1 to the present indicates that the standards under the Environmental Impact Assessment Report are conformed with.

The MTRCL has all along been maintaining close liaison with the community, and has, through multiple communication channels, exchanged views with District Councils, Rural Committees, owners' committees, Village Representatives and residents. Upon receipt of suggestions from individual residents on the operation of high speed trains, the MTRCL further exchanged views with residents to understand the situation at three Yuen Long San Tin district resident forums on May 2, May 26 and June 29, 2018. The number of complaints received by the MTRCL from Yuen Long district residents regarding the trial operations of high speed trains are at the Annex. For the nine cases under which residents allege that structures are damaged by vibrations caused by movement of high speed trains, the MTRCL has, in accordance with established procedures, referred the cases to loss adjusters for independent investigation after seeking consent from the owners concerned.

Further, in response to requests from residents, the MTRCL has arranged to monitor and collect data of vibrations and noise at various locations in Yuen Long San Tin district since mid-May. The monitoring work is still underway and will continue after commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL. Once sufficient data is gathered, the MTRCL will conduct assessment and explore appropriate related measures.

The Highways Department together with its Monitoring and Verification Consultant will continue to monitor the MTRCL's work to ensure that the Hong Kong Section of the XRL project conforms with relevant specifications and standards.