

LCQ7: Further implementation of HKeToll

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Dominic Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (Nov 22):

Question:

The Government has, since May this year, launched HKeToll, a free-flow tolling service, so that motorists can pay tunnel tolls remotely without the need to stop their vehicles or queue up for making payment at toll booths anymore. The Government currently implements HKeToll at three government tolled tunnels, and expects to implement the service at all government tolled tunnels by the end of this year. There are views that HKeToll makes road traffic smoother than before (e.g. there will not be traffic congestion arising from the balance of a motorist's stored value facility account being insufficient to pay the tunnel toll) and saves time for motorists. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has considered implementing HKeToll in government car parks; if so, of the details and timetable;
- (2) whether it will consider inviting operators of private car parks to adopt HKeToll as an additional payment means and a way to enter and leave car parks;
- (3) whether it will study replacing parking meters provided on the roadside with HKeToll; and
- (4) as many motorists have relayed that they have received deceptive SMS messages purportedly sent from HKeToll claiming that they have outstanding payments and luring them into clicking on the link to a fraudulent HKeToll webpage to carry out transactions, whether the authorities will step up efforts to educate motorists, so as to remind them of the official channels for paying outstanding tunnel tolls?

Reply:

President,

To promote Smart Mobility, HKeToll, a free-flow tolling service, has been progressively implemented at the government-tolled tunnels and Tsing Sha Control Area this year, enabling motorists to settle tunnel tolls remotely using toll tags without having to stop or queue at toll booths for payment, thereby saving motorists' time and bringing more convenience to them. With the help of the equipment installed at the toll area of the tunnels, the relevant systems process remote payments through detection of toll tag using the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, coupled with the

reading of the vehicle registration mark using the automatic number plate recognition technology. The Transport Department (TD) and the toll service provider have been closely monitoring the operation of the system and making adjustments to the system as necessary to further improve the HKeToll service.

Having consulted the TD, our reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Dominic Lee is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Government's plan is to first implement HKeToll at all government-tolled tunnels and Tsing Sha Control Area. When the relevant technology becomes more prevalent, the TD would consider extending the service to other road-traffic related purposes when appropriate, such as payment of parking fees by remote means at government carparks; for private carparks, it is believed that individual operators would have their own commercial and operational considerations as to whether or not to install the relevant systems.

(3) The application environment for on-street metered parking spaces is different from that of tunnels. In particular, the installation of overhead toll collection equipment is necessary for implementing HKeToll. Having considering a number of factors (such as roadside space, installation costs, maintenance and the appropriate technology, etc), the TD considers it more appropriate and cost-effective to continue to use on-street parking meters. The existing parking meters already accept remote payments through the "HKeMeter" mobile application, and at the convenience of the public, there are various electronic payment methods available for use.

(4) The TD is very concerned about the recent emergence of counterfeit websites pretending to be HKeToll service, attempting to deceive users into making payments and obtaining their vehicle registration marks and credit card information. As soon as any such counterfeit websites comes to the TD's attention, the TD will immediately refer them to the Police for follow-up actions and timely disseminate information to the public through press releases to remind the public to avoid being deceived.

The TD has stepped up publicity through its website and "HKeMobility" mobile application to remind motorists to beware of the fake messages. The HKeToll service does not send any text messages or emails with hyperlinks to vehicle owners, nor does it direct them to the linked websites to make transactions. Should there be any need for paying outstanding tolls online, members of the public must log in the HKeToll website (hketoll.gov.hk) or its mobile application and follow the relevant instructions to complete the transaction.

To further enhance public education, a dedicated page on "Beware of Fraud" will be added to the HKeToll website and mobile application at the end of this month to strengthen the promotion of anti-fraud information, to guard against counterfeit websites, and to provide more practical information on protecting personal data and credit card information for users' reference.