

# TAC discusses fare increase applications from franchised bus operators and briefed on latest progress of Universal Accessibility Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed today (November 29) the fare increase applications from franchised bus operators, and was briefed on the latest progress of the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme.

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said that in deliberating on the fare increase applications in respect of three bus franchises, the TAC had considered and balanced a basket of factors under the Fare Adjustment Arrangement for franchised buses. These factors include public acceptability and affordability, the service performance of the bus operators, the past and forecast financial performance of the operators, as well as a supportable fare increase rate computed for reference through a formula taking into account the changes in the Composite Consumer Price Index and the wage index.

Professor Cheung said, "In accordance with the established practice, the TAC will submit its advice to the Government for consideration by the Chief Executive in Council."

Members were also briefed by the Government on the latest progress of the UA Programme. The Government has been striving to create a barrier-free and accessible environment, and launched the UA Programme in August 2012 to proactively retrofit barrier-free access facilities at walkways. The scope of the UA Programme has subsequently been expanded with a view to covering more walkways. A special scheme was launched in 2019 to retrofit lifts at the public walkways of three types of housing estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority, namely estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme, the Buy or Rent Option Scheme and public rental housing estates with properties divested. As of the end of October 2024, 211 items were completed under the UA Programme, accounting for approximately 60 per cent of all items, while 166 items were under construction.

In order to expedite the implementation of various projects under the UA Programme, the Highways Department (HyD) endeavours to take forward various measures including the continued adoption of modular integrated construction to enhance the speed of construction and stringent monitoring of the performance of contractors. Meanwhile, the HyD has been actively exploring and implementing various enhanced measures to better respond to the needs of the public. Apart from continuously optimising the design of lifts for the convenience of wheelchair users, the HyD will also carry out beautification

works for the external walls of the lifts, and adopt new materials and installations to enhance the cleanliness of lifts.

Professor Cheung said, "Members are pleased to see that the Government continues to retrofit barrier-free access facilities at walkways, and at the same time strives to enhance the efficiency on the implementation of projects and incorporate more elements which could bring convenience and benefits to citizens. Members also took note of the latest implementation progress of the items under various phases."