

## TAC discusses proposal to increase penalties for illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward and is briefed on traffic situation of Central – Wan Chai Bypass

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

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed the proposal to increase penalties for illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward and was briefed by the Government on the latest traffic situation of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link (CWB) today (February 19).

Currently, it is illegal for a person to drive or use a motor vehicle for carriage of passengers for hire or reward without meeting prescribed conditions, and third-party risks insurance for the vehicle concerned may be invalidated. The Government has been taking a multi-pronged approach comprising enforcement, education and publicity in combating such illicit acts.

With the increasingly widespread use of online-hailing platforms, illegal hire services making use of such platforms have become more prevalent in recent years. To strengthen the deterrent effect for better protection of the safety of passengers and other road users, the Government proposes to increase the penalties for illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward.

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said, "Members supported the proposal, and noted that in proposing the penalties the Government sought to increase the deterrent effect of the offence while upholding the proportionality of the proposed penalty level, having regard to the severity of the contravention and the penalties for offences of similar nature."

In addition, Members were briefed by the Government on the traffic situation of CWB since its stage 1 commissioning, as well as the traffic arrangements upon its full commissioning. The road link joining the CWB to the Rumsey Street Flyover westbound will be commissioned on February 24, signifying the full commissioning of the CWB.

"Members noted that since the stage 1 commissioning of the CWB, the Transport Department (TD) has implemented various temporary traffic measures to facilitate motorists' choice of appropriate routes and to divert the additional traffic induced due to the outstanding road link. The TD will continue to monitor the situation closely and implement measures such as enhancing road signages, with a view to ensuring the smooth operation of the CWB upon its full commissioning, thereby bringing convenience to motorists,"

Professor Cheung said.