

Transport Department's response to conversion of red minibus routes into green minibus routes operations

â€œIn response to the media enquiries regarding the conversion of red minibus (RMB) routes into green minibus (GMB) routes operations, a spokesman for the Transport Department (TD) today (June 6) responds as follows:

To ensure the service quality level of RMBs and achieve more effective monitoring, it has been the Government's established policy to encourage the conversion of RMBs to GMBs. To align with this policy, the TD has been planning and developing new GMB route packages based on passenger demand and has been inviting applications from interested parties (including RMB operators) to run these routes through the annual Green Minibus Operators Selection exercise. In response to requests from the public light bus trade, the TD had studied converting some of the long-established RMB routes directly into GMB routes operations.

Since February 2022, the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (\$2 Scheme) has been extended to cover RMB routes. Currently, about 70 RMB routes have voluntarily participated in the scheme. According to the requirements of the \$2 Scheme, the operators of the relevant RMB routes are required to submit operational information to the TD, including routings, fares and vehicle deployment, etc. In compliance with the requirements of the \$2 Scheme, the operating mode of these RMB routes is largely the same as that of GMB routes. This arrangement allows the TD to grasp the specific route details, and to facilitate the review on expediting the conversion of RMB into GMB operations.

To achieve more effective monitoring of public light bus services, the TD, after review, intends to invite applications from RMB routes that have participated in the \$2 Scheme and fulfilled the specific criteria for direct conversion to GMB route operations. Taking into account the existing GMB operating mode and requirements, the preliminary conditions for the RMB routes to be invited to apply for the conversion include having at least five years of service, vehicles of the route only operating on that single route with whole day and daily service, as well as operating the relevant route by a single operator.

The TD consulted the public light bus trades (including GMB operators and RMB trade associations) for their opinions in late May this year and received positive responses from them.

The TD will inform the GMB Operators Selection Board of the details and relevant requirements of the conversion of RMB routes to GMB route operations, and plans to issue invitations to the operators of the eligible

RMB routes within July. The TD will process each application to ensure that the routes meet the requirements for operating GMB services, including the employment of drivers for the routes and the daily operation and fare level being monitored by the TD.