

LCQ12: Temporary works area of Shatin to Central Link

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (January 20):

Question:

In its consultation paper on the Kowloon City section of the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL") project issued to the Kowloon City District Council on May 21 last year, the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") has proposed setting up a temporary works area ("works area") in the Kai Tak Development Area. It is expected that the works area will cover about 20 hectares and will be used for material storage and installation of concrete batching, stirring and rock crushing facilities. Quite a number of residents in the vicinity of the proposed works area (such as Grand Waterfront, Sky Tower and Wyler Gardens, etc.) have relayed to me their worries that the excessive size of the works area and the close proximity of its facilities to the residential area would lead to serious noise, air and traffic nuisances, thus affecting their daily life. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the details of the arrangements for various facilities in the aforesaid works area;

(b) given that the Government and MTRCL have engaged an environmental consultant to conduct a thorough environmental impact assessment on the installation and operation of the aforesaid SCL project and its related temporary facilities, when the assessment report will be completed and the contents of the report publicised to the public, so as to facilitate members of the public to express their views on the contents;

(c) whether the authorities will undertake to arrange for the facilities, which may give rise to the aforesaid nuisances in the works area, to be located as far away from the residential area as practicable; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; what new specific measures they have in place to reduce the nuisances to residents in the district during the implementation of the SCL project; and

(d) whether it will, in response to the request by the residents in the district, review afresh the size of the works area; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government and MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") are carrying out further planning and design of the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL") project. We are also looking at the details of the works, including the setting up of essential temporary supporting facilities for construction, such as concrete batching plant, rock crushing plant, stockpiling area and barging point, etc.

Regarding the sub-questions on the setting up of the aforesaid facilities, I would like to respond as follows:

(a)&(b) We shall need to process a huge amount of excavated materials arising from the construction of railway tunnels and stations of the SCL project. With a view to handle these excavated rock and soil in the most effective and environmentally friendly manner, we propose a temporary works area in the Kai Tak Development Area for setting up a stockpiling area, a rock crushing plant, a concrete batching plant and a barging point. With these temporary supporting facilities, the excavated materials can be stored temporarily and sorted for re-use. Rocks that are sorted out as suitable material can be processed and will be delivered to the batching

plant for making concrete. Suitable soil can be re-used for backfilling the areas near tunnels and stations. Unsuitable materials will be delivered to the barging point via the shortest route and be transported by sea to the designated handling areas. Such an arrangement will not only allow the recycling of construction spoils hereby reducing construction wastes and pollution, but also minimise the environmental and traffic impacts induced by the transportation of the excavated materials.

The MTRCL propose to set up the above-mentioned temporary facilities in an area located between the future Kai Tak Station and To Kwa Wan Station. Such a location lies at about the centre of the Kai Tak Development Area and provides a certain separation with the residential buildings in the Ma Tau Kok, To Kwa Wan, San Po Kong and Kwun Tong areas.

The Government and MTRCL understood that both residents and Council Members are highly concerned about the adverse environmental impacts induced by the setting up and operation of the temporary supporting facilities in Kai Tak Development Area. We have therefore engaged environmental consultants to conduct a detailed environmental assessment on the construction and operation of the railway works and the associated supporting facilities. In fact, the Environmental Impact Assessment of the SCL project has commenced in late 2008 and it studies the noise, air, water and solid waste impacts due to the railway project, and recommends the necessary mitigation measures. Upon completion of the study by mid 2010, the MTRCL will submit the study report to the relevant authorities for approval, release the report for public inspection and comments, and consult the relevant District Councils. The report will then have to be approved by the Environmental Protection Department. Works can only be commenced when the necessary Environmental Permit is issued. All these temporary facilities will have to comply with the stringent requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment

Ordinance, and to minimise the possible impacts to the local residents and the surroundings.

(c) The Government is committed to take all feasible measures to minimise the possible impacts arising from the temporary supporting facilities. However, as the proposed SCL alignment will run through the densely populated and highly developed areas, there is very limited choice of sites for setting up the aforesaid temporary supporting facilities. If these temporary supporting facilities are set up at other remote areas, the construction traffic will put additional pressure on the roads and worsen the pollution in the territory as a whole. It will also adversely affect the progress of the SCL construction. Having taking all these factors in consideration, the Government agreed in principle to set up such temporary supporting facilities in the Kai Tak Development Area. Such a location will be in close proximity to the SCL stations and tunnels, thus allowing the excavated materials to be transported to the stockpiling area for sorting and processing in the shortest route. The concrete produced can also be delivered to construction sites in a fast manner. This arrangement can effectively reduce the environmental and traffic problems arising from the transportation of the excavated materials from the SCL works.

We sounded out the proposal and location of the temporary supporting facilities to the Kowloon City District Council in May 2009 and the public in forums held from June to July 2009. Moreover, the Highways Department, Kowloon City District Office, the MTRCL conducted a visit on September 18, 2009 with some members of the Kowloon City District Council and representatives of local residents and concern groups to an existing concrete batching plant in Tsing Yi and a barging point at Chai Wan. During the visit, the representatives appreciated the operating conditions of these facilities and their effects to the surroundings. The residents gave us a lot of comments. We understood their concerns and have seriously considered their views. Yet it is very difficult

to find another better site that can be used as works area and farther away from residential areas.

(d) Currently, the area of the proposed SCL works area is about 20 hectares. The requirement has been worked out in accordance with the principles of least works area and the best land use. As the scale of the SCL project is large, a large works area is necessary to handle the huge amount of excavated materials and to produce the large amount of concrete required for the construction of stations and tunnels. Yet, the extent of the works area will be reduced gradually when the construction works progresses. The Government and MTRCL will periodically review the extent of the works area according to the latest development of the Kai Tak Development projects and the requests of local residents, and reduce the land take when situation permits.

Ends/Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Issued at HKT 11:54