

LCQ7: Criteria for changing frequency and routes of franchised buses

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Following is a question by the Hon Audrey Eu and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (April 6):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council of the respective route numbers of franchised bus routes which at present meet the following criteria set out in the "Guidelines on Service Improvement and Reduction in Bus Route Development Programmes" issued by the Transport Department (TD):

(a) an average occupancy rate below 85% during the busiest half-hour of the peak period, or below 30% during the off-peak period (for TD to consider frequency reduction);

(b) an occupancy rate of 100% during the busiest half-hour of the peak period and 85% during that one hour, or 60% during the busiest one hour of the off-peak period (for TD to consider frequency improvement);

(c) an occupancy rate below 50% during the busiest hour although the headway has been maintained at an interval of 15 minutes during peak hours and 30 minutes during off-peak hours (for TD to consider route cancellation or amalgamation with other routes); and

(d) an occupancy rate of not more than 20% to 30% at the proposed truncated section during the busiest hour (for TD to consider route truncation)?

Reply:

President,

The public demand for franchised bus services changes over time as a result of district development and commissioning of new infrastructure. The Transport Department (TD) reviews from time to time the changes in passenger demand for franchised bus services, and discusses with the franchised bus companies the

corresponding service adjustments in order to meet the passenger demand.

In formulating franchised bus route development programme, TD will consider proposals to enhance or reduce bus services according to the planning guidelines on franchised bus services (planning guidelines). Apart from specifying various occupancy rates as a factor for consideration for service enhancement or reduction, the guidelines also set out other relevant factors for consideration. They include the nature of the bus routes proposed to be cancelled, amalgamated or reduced; availability of reasonable alternative services; level of fares of alternative services; operational issues for interchange; impact on bus captains; and environmental benefits arising from the service change. TD will take into consideration all the relevant factors to ensure that the interests of passengers are taken care of and the impact on them can be minimised as far as possible. The planning guidelines are at Annex 1.

Under the 2011-12 bus route development programme, details of bus routes for which services will be improved or reduced according to the planning guidelines are as follows:

- (1) a total of 18 franchised bus routes for consideration of frequency reduction;
- (2) a total of 42 franchised bus routes for consideration of frequency improvement;
- (3) a total of five franchised bus routes for consideration of route cancellation or amalgamation; and
- (4) One franchised bus route for consideration of route truncation.

Details of the concerned franchised bus routes are at Annex 2. TD is consulting the relevant District Councils regarding the above bus route development programme.

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