

LCQ13: Electric mobility devices

Following is a question by the Hon Charles Peter Mok and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

In recent years, the authorities of quite a number of cities (such as Singapore) have permitted, through a registration or licensing system, newly emerged electric personal mobility devices (e.g. mini-motor cycles, pedelecs, electric scooters and electric unicycles) to be used on roads legally, and regulated matters such as the sizes, horsepower, maximum speeds and safety equipment of such mobility devices. However, under the laws of Hong Kong, all such devices are prohibited from being used on roads. On the other hand, one of the study items of the "Consultancy Study on Enhancing Walkability in Hong Kong", commenced by the Transport Department in 2017, is to explore whether such mobility devices are suitable for use in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the scope of the aforesaid study includes an assessment of (i) the demand of members of the public for electric personal mobility devices, and (ii) the roles that can be played by such devices in Hong Kong's transport infrastructure (e.g. serving as short-haul feeder transport means in districts where public transport services are inadequate); if so, of the progress of the assessment and the timetable for putting forward preliminary recommendations; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will, by making reference to the practices in other cities, establish a registration and licensing system for electric personal mobility devices to the effect that such devices may be used on designated roads legally; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will explore launching a trial scheme under which electric personal mobility devices are permitted to be used at designated places (e.g. roads with relatively low vehicular flow as well as designated public spaces, cycle tracks and footpaths), so as to assess the feasibility of legalising the use of such devices; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the various parts of the Hon Charles Peter Mok's question is as follows:

The Government endeavours to take forward "Walk in HK" and encourages citizens to "walk more, ride less". Various measures have been launched to enhance the overall walkability of Hong Kong so as to foster a pedestrian-friendly environment. In this connection, the Transport Department (TD) has commissioned the Consultancy Study on Enhancing Walkability in Hong Kong,

which covers several key issues on encouraging walking, including the feasibility of the use of electric mobility devices in Hong Kong.

Currently, according to the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374), "motor vehicle" means any mechanically propelled vehicle. Electric mobility devices such as mini-motor cycles, pedelecs, electric scooters and electric unicycles are all mechanically propelled and thus belong to "motor vehicles", which must be licensed for use on roads.

In view of the rapid technological advancement of electric mobility devices, the Consultancy Study on Enhancing Walkability in Hong Kong will look into the latest development of relevant technology, the usage of electric mobility devices in Hong Kong, the suitability of their use in Hong Kong for short-distance commuting, etc. The TD will also review the regulation of electric mobility devices in overseas regions and evaluate the implications of the use of these devices in Hong Kong on road safety, accessibility and road users, as well as the relevant legal requirements, management and implementation issues, etc.

The Consultancy Study on Enhancing Walkability in Hong Kong is expected to be completed in mid-2020. The Government will make reference to the findings of the study to consider the need to introduce a regulatory system and a trial scheme for electric mobility devices.

EPD to revise Indoor Air Quality Objectives on July 1

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) announced today (January 30) that the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Objectives under the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme for Offices and Public Places (the Scheme) will be revised from July 1, 2019.

An EPD spokesman said that, in revising the IAQ Objectives, the EPD has made reference to the latest IAQ guidelines published by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has taken into account local circumstances. The IAQ Objectives under the Scheme will be revised as follows: tighten the concentration levels of carbon monoxide, respirable suspended particulates and radon; add new short-term objectives for formaldehyde and nitrogen dioxide; add a new parameter of mould; and remove the three physical parameters of room temperature, relative humidity and air movement which are not directly related to IAQ.

The EPD has been implementing the Scheme since 2003 to encourage property owners and management to adopt good IAQ management practices in their premises. Premises that are used as offices or public places and are served by mechanical ventilation and air conditioning systems may join the

Scheme. Premises' owners or management who wish to participate in the Scheme have to commission accredited IAQ certificate-issuing bodies to assess whether the IAQ of the premises can meet Excellent Class or Good Class IAQ under the Scheme. Premises participating in the Scheme are required to carry out full certification of all IAQ parameters every five years and for the years in between to carry out re-certification of specified IAQ parameters annually.

Premises which have joined the Scheme before July 1, 2019 may, during the annual renewal of the IAQ certificate, either continue to carry out the re-certification of specified parameters of the current IAQ Objectives until the end of that 5-year re-certification cycle or adopt the revised IAQ Objectives by carrying out full certification of all IAQ parameters. Premises newly joining the Scheme or which have completed their 5-year re-certification cycle on or after July 1, 2019 shall adopt the revised IAQ Objectives for full certification. To distinguish premises complying with the current or the revised IAQ Objectives, IAQ labels and certificates of different design will be issued for premises certified under the revised IAQ Objectives.

Information about the Scheme and the revised IAQ Objectives is available in the website of EPD's IAQ Information Centre at www.iaq.gov.hk.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 is 103.3 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

LCQ8: Establishment of Traffic Wardens

Following is a question by the Hon Hui Chi-fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

Regarding the establishment of and the manpower deployment for Traffic Wardens, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the establishment of Traffic Wardens in various police districts across the territory, as well as the mechanism and criteria adopted for formulating such establishment;

(2) of the reasons why it has not set up a mechanism for reviewing the establishment of and manpower deployment for Traffic Wardens;

(3) whether it received in the past five years any request from members of the local communities and District Councils for deploying additional Traffic Wardens to carry out duties in their districts; if so, of the respective reasons for accepting and rejecting such requests;

(4) how the pay scales of the two ranks of Traffic Wardens as well as the time and costs involved in the induction training for Traffic Wardens at present compare with those of police officers; and

(5) in which years of the past decade the authorities increased or reduced the manpower of Traffic Wardens, and the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Hui Chi-fung's question is as follows:

(1) The establishment of Traffic Wardens in various police districts across the territory is set out at Annex 1.

Traffic Wardens are responsible for the enforcement duties under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) and the Motor Vehicle Idling (Fixed Penalty) Ordinance (Cap. 611), as well as managing and directing vehicles and pedestrians. Apart from relying on Traffic Wardens for parking-related enforcement duties, police officers in the police districts also take enforcement actions concerning parking and road traffic offences.

The Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) will consider various factors, including the overall manpower distribution of frontline enforcement staff and resources deployment in individual police districts, as well as traffic conditions in the districts (such as the number of on-street metered parking spaces), and deploy manpower as appropriate to meet actual operational needs.

(2) There is an established mechanism for the Government to review and determine the manpower resources for all departments. The Police have always conducted timely reviews of the establishment and resources for frontline enforcement staff based on operational needs. Where warranted, resources will be redeployed internally or additional resources will be sought to cope with traffic enforcement duties. The Police created a total of eight Traffic Warden posts in 2017 and 2018 and will create another 49 Traffic Warden posts in the 2018-19 financial year.

(3) In the past five years, the Police have received requests from District Council members and the public, etc. for deploying additional Traffic Wardens to carry out duties in certain districts. The Police have not retained comprehensive records relating to such requests and are therefore unable to provide the reasons for accepting or rejecting these requests. When the Police deploy Traffic Wardens for enforcement duties, they have to take into

consideration various factors, including the overall manpower distribution of frontline officers and resource deployment in individual police districts, as well as the traffic conditions in the districts (such as the number of on-street metered parking spaces), and deploy manpower as appropriate to meet actual operational needs.

(4) The job nature and job requirements of Traffic Wardens and police officers differ, and that Traffic Wardens are civilian staff, not disciplinary staff. It would be difficult to compare these two grades of officers.

The monthly salary of Traffic Wardens ranges from Master Pay Scale (MPS) point 6 (\$17,855) to point 12 (\$25,790). For Senior Traffic Wardens, their monthly salary ranges from MPS point 13 (\$27,340) to point 16 (\$31,685). Newly recruited Traffic Wardens are required to undergo a four-week induction training, which aims to ensure that they have a firm grasp of the professional knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for discharging their duties.

(5) In the past decade, the Police have created 77 Traffic Warden posts to meet operational needs. Details can be found at Annex 2.

LCQ5: Park-and-ride facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

In recent years, more and more members of the public have moved to reside in remote rural areas in the New Territories. Owing to a lack of public transport services in such areas, they need to commute, by private cars, to and from the nearby town centres for meeting their daily needs, or to and from the urban areas for work. In order to relieve the pressure generated by the growing number of private cars on the road networks in the urban areas, the Government has over the years implemented park-and-ride (PnR) schemes, which offer concessionary parking fees to encourage members of the public to park their private cars near public transport hubs or railway stations and then take public transport to go to the urban areas. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the public transport hubs and railway stations at which a PnR scheme is currently implemented; the number of parking spaces, their utilisation rates during peak and non-peak hours, the percentage of time when such parking spaces were fully occupied, the levels of parking fees charged and the concessions offered, at each of such locations in each of the past three

years;

(2) given that the problem of road congestion in the urban areas is worsening, whether the Government will increase substantially the number of parking spaces and parking fee concessions provided under PnR schemes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as there have all along been suggestions from members of the public for implementing an extensive PnR scheme at the Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange and the Tai Lam Tunnel Bus-Bus Interchange as well as increasing the number of parking spaces provided under the PnR schemes near Kam Sheung Road Station of the West Rail Line and Sheung Shui Station of the East Rail Line, whether the Government has followed up those suggestions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been adopting a public transport-oriented policy, which encourages the public to make good use of the public transport network for their journeys as far as possible and minimise their reliance on private cars. Railway provides high capacity and convenient services. It is a green and efficient mass transit. Thus, the Government has all along adopted railway as backbone of the public transport system, while coordinating the complementarity among different public transport services, including franchised bus services with high capacity, and public light buses which provides supplementary feeder services. In fact, over 12 million passenger trips, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the total passenger trips, are made on public transport every day, the usage of which is the highest in the world.

On this basis, the Government supports the provision of park-and-ride (PnR) facilities at or near suitable railway stations to encourage drivers to take the train after parking their vehicles, hence reducing the road traffic entering congested areas.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Chan Han-pan's question is as follows:

(1) Currently, there are 25 car parks providing PnR concessions in Hong Kong, nine of them are managed by the Housing Department and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), 12 are managed by the Link Asset Management Limited (the LINK) and four are managed by other private companies, providing a total of around 10 000 parking spaces.

Among the aforesaid car parks, the nine car parks with PnR services managed by the Housing Department and the MTRCL provides a total of 3 513 PnR parking spaces. These car parks are located at or near MTR stations, including the Hong Kong Station, Ocean Park Station, Kowloon Station, West Kowloon Station of the High Speed Rail, Hung Hom Station, Tsing Yi Station, Choi Hung Station, Sheung Shui Station and Kam Sheung Road Station, to make

it convenient for drivers to switch to MTR. Drivers who park their cars and switch to MTR to travel to their destinations can enjoy a parking fee discount of about 50 per cent on average at these car parks. The PnR rate of each car park and relevant details have been uploaded to the MTRCL's website for public reference.

In the third quarter of 2018, the parking spaces in the nine car parks mentioned above were patronised by nearly 2 980 users per day on average, with PnR users accounting for about 60 per cent of the total number of users, see Annex 1 for details. The Transport Department (TD) has not kept the relevant usage figures in the past three years.

As regards the car parks managed by the LINK or other private companies, the provision of PnR concessions is a matter of commercial decision. The Government does not have statistics on utilisation in this respect. The number of parking spaces in these car parks with PnR concessions are tabulated in Annex 2.

(2) and (3) Regarding enhancing the PnR facilities near Sheung Shui Station and at Kam Sheung Road Station, there is a public car park in Po Shek Wu Estate at Choi Yuen Road, Sheung Shui. After the completion of all the works, a total of about 220 private car parking spaces will be created, 60 per cent of which, i.e. about 130 private car parking spaces, will be PnR spaces. The first phase car park was commissioned in August 2018 and provides 166 private car parking spaces, of which 100 are PnR spaces. The TD will continue to monitor the usage pattern of the PnR facilities in the above car park.

The existing PnR facilities at Kam Sheung Road Station of the West Rail Line will be permanently reprovisioned in Package 1 of the property development project at that station. The car park offering PnR concessions at the station is expected to commence operation in 2025 and provides 610 PnR spaces.

Moreover, regarding the Member's suggestion for new PnR schemes for private cars for the Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange and the Tai Lam Tunnel Bus-Bus Interchange respectively, the TD will continue to monitor the demand closely. With the principle of "single site, multiple uses" in mind, the TD will explore and identify available sites with a view to providing the parking facilities and associated link road facilities required.

Looking ahead, the Government will continue to make reference to the recommendations in the Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong released by the Transport Advisory Committee in December 2014, including adjusting the first registration tax and annual licence fee for private cars, reviewing the parking policy, in order to reduce private car usage and alleviate road traffic congestion. In taking forward individual railway projects, as well as urban renewal and new development projects, the Government will also consider introducing more PnR facilities at suitable locations. When proceeding with railway projects, the Government will request the MTRCL to conduct an assessment of how stations are to be connected with other modes of public transport and the interchange arrangements involved. Where conditions of individual railway projects are deemed suitable, the

Government will ask the MTRCL to consider various options for adding PnR facilities to facilitate the use of the mass transit system.

From the angle of practical consideration, it is often not easy to identify suitable sites for new car parks nowadays. Another concern that needs to be addressed would be the traffic impact of additional parking spaces on the local road network. Given the principle that our transport policy is to develop a public transport oriented system with railway as the backbone, the TD will continue to optimise public transport services. This will encourage more motorists to change their travel pattern and switch to public transport services directly, thereby enabling more efficient use of our limited road space. Thank you President.