

PRESS STATEMENT

13 September 2020

MTR Sets Up Investigation Panel to investigate the delay to the commencement of the new signalling system on East Rail Line

The MTR Corporation is highly concerned about the delay in service commencement of the new East Rail Line signalling system and introduction of 9-car trains, announced on Friday (11 September 2020), following a final review prior to commissioning. The Corporation recognises the public's concern over this matter and would like to apologise for the last-minute deferral of the introduction of the new signalling system.

The Corporation has set up an Investigation Panel (the Panel) to investigate the matter and has appointed Ir Edmund Leung, former President of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, to chair the Panel. Two external experts, namely, Mr Joseph Wong, Director, Infrastructure, China Region, WSP and Mr Gab Parris, Technical Discipline Lead & Associate Director, WSP have also been engaged to provide the Panel with professional advice.

The Panel also includes Engineering Director Dr Peter Ewen and six experienced staff from the relevant divisions of the Corporation to support the Panel's investigation.

The Panel will look into the following matters and recommend improvement measures:

- To ascertain how the potential "route setting function" issue in the new signalling system was identified, confirmed, analysed and followed-up;
- To review whether the internal communication and reporting mechanism of the Corporation is robust and being timely and properly implemented during the above-mentioned process;
- To investigate the reporting by the Corporation to relevant government department and whether or not this was timely and properly implemented.

Regarding the decision taken last Friday, the Corporation concluded that, given the specific circumstances, the short-term use of operational procedures to manage and correct route settings was a less satisfactory approach for providing the best possible customer service. The Corporation decided it would be preferable to wait until a technical solution has been accepted for deployment. Our work on this will continue. The Corporation reiterates that even under the potential incorrect route setting, the Automatic Train Protection System is fully functioning to safeguard train operation. This issue has no impact on safety and the possibility of occurrence is considered very low.

The Panel expects to complete the investigation and submit investigation results to relevant government department in three months. The findings will be made public in due course.

-End-