

Information Paper for LegCo Panel on Transport

Proposals to Convert Tuen Mun Pier to a Cross Boundary Ferry Terminal

PURPOSE

This paper updates members on the present position regarding the Administration's consideration of the proposals to convert Tuen Mun Pier to a cross boundary ferry terminal ("CBFT").

BACKGROUND

2. At the meeting of the Panel held in November 2001, we informed members that the Government had received proposals from the private sector to use Tuen Mun Pier to operate cross boundary passenger ferry services to Macau and other cities in the Pearl River Delta Region, and that we were examining the proposals.

PRESENT POSITION

3. Tuen Mun Pier has four berths, one of which is currently used for the operation of a domestic passenger ferry service. The other three berths could be made available for operation of cross boundary passenger ferry services. The Pier would have to be modified in order to accommodate the requirements for immigration and customs checks and to provide for segregation of passenger traffic for domestic service and cross boundary services respectively. We have examined the modification works required, which include reinforcement of the pier structure and reconfiguration of the internal layout, and the costs incurred.

4. Staff and equipment are required to support the operation of the proposed CBFT, including the immigration and customs control facilities. We have examined the resources required, taking the approach that the level of requirements should be minimised while maintaining the basic requirements to ensure safe and smooth operation of the proposed facilities.

5. We have met with representatives from the Tuen Mun District Council and some residents' organisations respectively to listen to their views on how the proposals would benefit residents in the New Territories.

6. We have also reviewed the patronage trend and utilisation rates of the two existing CBFTs. They have a total maximum handling capacities of about 26 million passengers per annum. In 2001, the combined passenger throughput of the two existing CBFTs was 17.9 million, representing an average utilisation rate of 68%. This represents a slight increase in patronage level over the last three years, but remains considerably lower than the peak levels in 1994 - 96 in which the annual throughput was over 20 million and utilisation rate was about 79%.

7. The throughput figures and utilisation rates of the existing CBFTs show that there is no immediate need for another CBFT. We note that the proposed CBFT could strengthen cross boundary ferry services and enhance the convenience for residents in the New Territories, but we also have to be careful in spending resources in view of the current financial situation. We are now reviewing the financial implications, including the possibility of requiring financial contribution from operators interested in operating services at the proposed CBFT, to see if the proposals should be taken forward.

8. We will brief the Panel when we have come to a conclusion on the proposals.

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