

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1013/04-05
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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**Panel on Economic Services and
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works**

**Minutes of joint meeting held on
Monday, 31 January 2005, at 9:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Members of the Panel on Economic Services

Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP (Chairman)
* Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
* Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, S.B.St.J., JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KWONG Chi-kin
Hon TAM Heung-man

Members of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, BBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC

(* Also members of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works)

Member attending : Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP

Members absent : Members of the Panel on Economic Services

Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Hon CHIM Pui-chung

Members of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

Public Officers attending : Ms Sandra LEE
Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development)

Mr Wilson FUNG
Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development)

Mr Darryl CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development)

Miss CHEUNG Siu-hing
Deputy Secretary for Security

Captain West WU
Senior Pilot
Government Flying Services

Mr Thomas TSO
Deputy Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) 1

Mr MA Lee-tak
Project Manager (HK Island & Islands)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Ms Christine TSE
Acting District Planning Officer (Hong Kong)
Planning Department

Mr LEUNG Yu-keung
Deputy Director-General of Civil Aviation

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Hong Kong Express Airways Ltd.

Mr Andrew TSE
Chief Executive Officer

Ms Cheyenne CHAN
Executive Director –
Commercial Operations/Corporate Services

The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group

Mr Michael D KADOORIE
Member

Mr David C TONG
Member

Mrs Sandra MAK
Member

Designing Hong Kong Harbour District

Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN
Convenor

Hong Kong Hotels Association

Mr James LU
Executive Director

Aerospace Forum Asia

Mr Martin CRAIGS
President

Central and Western District Council

Mr CHAN Tak-chor
Chairman

Ms CHENG Lai-king
Chairman of Food, Environment, Hygiene & Works
Committee

Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong

Mr Tommy TAM
Director

Wan Chai District Council

Dr TSE Wing-ling, John
Vice-Chairman

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Senior Council Secretary (1)9

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant (1)5

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I Election of Chairman

Mr James TIEN was elected Chairman of the joint meeting.

II Proposed domestic heliport development

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| (LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(01) | - Submission dated 20 January 2005 from Hong Kong Express Airways Limited |
| LC Paper Nos. CB(1)769/04-05(02) and CB(1)791/04-05(03) | - Submission from The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(03) | - Submission dated 17 January 2005 from Designing Hong Kong Harbour District |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)399/04-05(01) | - Submission dated 2 December 2004 from Central and Western District Council |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)791/04-05(02) | - Submission from Wan Chai District Council |

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| LC Paper No. CB(1)791/04-05(01) | - Submission from Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)802/04-05(01) | - Submission dated 26 January 2005 from The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(04) | - Information paper provided by the Administration |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(05) | - Supplementary information on movement statistics of the Government Flying Service at Central Heliport/Wanchai Temporary Heliport provided by the Administration |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)770/04-05 | - Background brief on the proposed development of a domestic heliport in Sheung Wan prepared by the Secretariat |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)416/04-05(01) | - Submission from Sir Elly Kadoorie & Sons Limited |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)581/04-05(01) to (05) and LC Paper No. CB(1)442/04-05(01) & (02) | - Correspondence between the Administration and Sir Elly Kadoorie & Sons Limited on the proposed domestic heliport development |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)376/04-05(04) | - Information paper provided by the Administration for the meeting of the Panel on Economic Services on 7 December 2004 |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)673/04-05 | - Minutes of special meeting of the Panel on Economic Services on 7 December 2004 – Item III on "Proposed domestic heliport development") |

2. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that each deputation would be given five minutes for their oral presentation.

3. The Chairman welcomed the deputations to the meeting. He then invited the deputations to take turn and present their views on the proposed development of a heliport in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Express Airways Limited
(LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(01))

4. Mr Andrew TSE, Chief Executive Officer of Hong Kong Express Airways Limited, said that there was a need to provide a permanent domestic heliport in the

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central business district (CBD) which could allow shared use by commercial heliport operators and the Government. If both the sites at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) and Sheung Wan were available, the HKCEC site was the preferred choice. On cross-boundary heliport facilities, there was already a plan to expand the existing facilities at the roof-top of the Macau Ferry Terminal (MFT) to meet the anticipated demand in cross-boundary helicopter services. As such, the proposed heliport in either Sheung Wan or HKCEC should be confined to domestic operation.

The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group

(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)769/04-05(02) and CB(1)791/04-05(03))

5. With the aid of PowerPoint, Mr Michael D KADOORIE, Member of the Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group, gave a presentation on the proposed development of a regional heliport at the HKCEC site.

6. Mr KADOORIE said that the Working Group was of the view that the proposed Government heliport at the HKCEC site should be redesigned for shared use by commercial heliport operators and the Government. A regional heliport at the HKCEC site, if properly designed and integrated into the urban fabric, would be an attractive amenity serving the local community, business travelers and tourists alike. A Government-cum-commercial heliport at the HKCEC site would also facilitate a more effective use of scarce waterfront land resources. As the HKCEC site was conveniently located in CBD, it could provide easy connectivity with other modes of transportation. The location was also well away from residential buildings and was thus less noise sensitive than any other locations on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. A regional heliport at the HKCEC site would serve as a transportation hub acting as a gateway to the Pearl River Delta (PRD). The time advantage provided by helicopter services brought a real and valuable competitive business edge to Hong Kong. The Working Group therefore proposed that a ground-level heliport at the HKCEC site which was suitable for use by single-engine helicopters should be provided without delay. With such a facility, a fast and premium point-to-point service could be provided to meet the increasing demand for cross-boundary helicopter services. The proposed heliport could also form an integral part of the waterfront promenade. It would be an attractive community amenity for both Hong Kong people and visitors. He therefore appealed to members to support the proposed Government-cum-commercial heliport at the HKCEC site.

Designing Hong Kong Harbour District

(LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(03))

7. Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN, Convenor of Designing Hong Kong Harbour District, said that notwithstanding the adverse impacts associated with the development of heliports in general, he shared the view that there was a need to develop a heliport on Hong Kong Island. In so doing, due consideration must be given to the following:

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- (a) A long-term strategy and comprehensive plan for the development of helipads and heliports along the waterfront should be drawn up, taking into account the long-term forecast demand for such facilities. The number of heliports should be minimized as far as possible. In this regard, the Administration should explore the feasibility of shared use of heliport facilities by the Government and commercial heliport operators.
- (b) Any design and layout for a proposed site must demonstrate great care for harbour-front enhancement, taking into account the principles laid down by the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee. Clear principles should also be established including, inter alia, safety requirements, flight path, available supporting transport infrastructure, and noise screening by non-residential high rise buildings.
- (c) Multiple helipads used only for emergencies and high-level security matters could be located around the harbour as long as they did not obstruct public access (i.e. a landing mark on a roof, grass or pavement).

In his view, the proposed site in Sheung Wan fell short of the above requirements. The proposed heliport in the HKCEC site might involve reclamation and additional transport infrastructure. As such, the preferred location might be next to the Central Ferry Piers where it was well served by existing transport infrastructure. The site could also take advantage of the surrounding high-rise non-residential buildings as a natural noise barrier.

Hong Kong Hotels Association

8. Mr James LU, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Hotels Association, said that the Association supported the Government's proposal to develop a permanent heliport in the urban area for commercial helicopter services, both for domestic and cross-boundary services. The continuing economic development and increasing integration in the PRD region accorded a market for cross-boundary helicopter travel. The proposed site in Sheung Wan was not located in the CBD and did not fit the international image of Hong Kong. The Association however supported the proposal to develop a permanent heliport at the HKCEC site. With better planning, it was possible that a commercial heliport could be developed to allow shared use by the Government and commercial heliport operators. In order to catch up with the growth in the market, there was an urgent need for the Government to proceed with the plan to build a Government-cum-commercial heliport at the HKCEC site.

Aerospace Forum Asia

9. Mr Martin CRAIGS, President of the Aerospace Forum Asia, said that the Aerospace Forum Asia was a non-profit making organization and it did not have any business interest on the matter. He shared other speakers' common view that the development of a heliport in urban areas would bring substantial benefits to Hong Kong. He referred members to the experience of the heliports in New York and

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London. There were four heliports in New York City. Three of them were on Manhattan Island in New York City. The most famous one was the downtown heliport at Pier 6 which was surrounded by waterway. Manhattan was also a major financial centre and access point for tourists and investors. Likewise, the heliport in London was also located next to the River Thames. He pointed out that there were huge advantages for Hong Kong to develop a heliport along the waterfront as imaginably presented by Mr KADOORIE. He was pleased to support the ongoing discussion on the subject matter.

Central and Western District Council
(LC Paper No. CB(1)399/04-05(01))

10. Mr CHAN Tak-chor, Chairman of the Central and Western District Council, said that the Government had consulted the District Council on the proposed heliport development in Sheung Wan. During the consultation, the Government remarked that there was a need for each individual district in the territory to undertake certain social responsibilities. In this regard, he would like to share with members the firm commitment of Central and Western District to assume social responsibilities over the years. Along the waterfront between Mo Sing Leng and Sheung Wan, there were a number of abominable facilities, including the Victoria Public Mortuary, the Ex-Incinerator, abattoir (closed) and bus terminus in Kennedy Town, the Western District Public Cargo Working Area, the Western Wholesale Food Market, the tram depot, the barging point for transporting the stockpiled public fill by barges, etc. He also pointed out that emissions from ferries and the adverse noise impact of helicopter operation at MFT had already caused great nuisance and disturbance to nearby residents. Worse still, there was also a plan to expand the heliport facilities at the roof-top of MFT in phases. With all these facilities in the district, it would be unfair to say that the Central and Western District was unwilling to undertake social responsibilities.

11. Regarding the proposed commercial heliport in Sheung Wan, Mr CHAN said that he could not understand why the Government would propose a heliport next to the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park. Apart from adverse noise impact, the heliport would also occupy valuable waterfront space. If the Government considered that helicopter operation would cause undue disturbance to tourists in Golden Bauhinia Square, it was unfair for the Government to ignore the interest of residents in Central and Western District and place a heliport in Sheung Wan. He therefore urged the Administration to review the planning for heliport facilities.

12. As the Government was committed to returning the harbour to the people, Mr CHAN urged the Government to review the planning of public amenities on both sides of the harbour for the enjoyment of the public. The Central and Western District Council would be happy to discuss with the Administration on how to achieve the said objective.

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Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong

13. Mr Tommy TAM, Director of the Council, said that he did not have any particular comment on the subject matter.

Wan Chai District Council

(LC Paper No. CB(1)791/04-05(02))

14. Dr TSE Wing-ling, Vice-Chairman of the District Council, said that whilst raising no objection to the proposed Government helipad for the use of Government Flying Services (GFS) at the HKCEC site, the Wan Chai District Council strongly objected to any commercial operation at that site, not to mention the fact that the proposal might also involve harbour reclamation. The District Council urged the Administration to review the planning for heliport facilities, and explore the feasibility of using the roof-tops of commercial buildings as an alternative. Noting the constraint of single-engine helicopters which could only be operated at surface-level heliports, the District Council considered that the commercial heliport operators could consider deploying twin-engine helicopters for their operation, and hence, obviate the need to provide a surface-level heliport on Hong Kong Island. Further, there was no reason for the community to bear the adverse impacts associated with the development of a heliport when an alternative of using the roof-tops of commercial buildings existed. The District Council also considered that it was not necessary to restrict the location of the proposed heliport facilities to CBD only.

Discussion among members

15. The Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development) (DS/EDL (ED)) briefed members that the Government's planning objective was to provide a commercial heliport in the urban area. As a result of this commitment, the Government conducted a thorough site search exercise to identify a suitable heliport site to cater for commercial helicopter operations. After repeated rounds of site search, the Administration had finally identified a suitable waterfront site near the Western Park Sports Centre in Sheung Wan. This was a suitable site for developing a commercial heliport and involved no reclamation at the waterfront.

16. To facilitate members' understanding, DS/EDL(ED) also briefed members on the background to the reprovisioning of the Central Heliport at the HKCEC site in the context of the Wan Chai Development Phase II (WDII) project, the concerns expressed by the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on the adverse noise impact and incompatibility with the tourism focus of the Golden Bauhinia Square associated with the development of a helipad at the HKCEC site, as well as the Government's decision of confining the helipad at the HKCEC site to GFS's emergency services and essential security and support operation.

17. Regarding the proposal put forward by Mr KADOORIE, DS/EDL(ED) said that a commercial heliport at the HKCEC site with a development scale similar to that at the Sheung Wan site would involve harbour reclamation, estimated to be in the

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region of 1 000 to 1 500 m². The Court of Final Appeal (CFA) had previously ruled that the presumption against reclamation of the harbour could only be rebutted by establishing an overriding public need for reclamation. Given that there was already a suitable site in Sheung Wan, the proposal of reclaiming another site to accommodate commercial helicopter services would not satisfy the said principle and would be susceptible to legal challenge by any member of the public. Another option was for GFS and commercial operators to share the use of the proposed Government helipad at the HKCEC site. However, the shared-use of the single helipad would severely constrain the future development of commercial helicopter services. It would also deprive the industry of the necessary supporting facilities such as passenger lounge, parking, etc.

18. Notwithstanding the above, DS/EDL(ED) said that if members were in support of the proposal for a Government-cum-commercial heliport at the HKCEC site, the Administration would be prepared to re-visit this option.

19. Mr Ronny TONG concurred that there was a need to develop an integrated heliport in the territory. The heliport must be easily accessible and its operation should not cause nuisance to nearby residents. Having considered the above principles, he considered that the site in Sheung Wan was not suitable for heliport development, and hence, he would not support the proposal. On the other hand, it seemed that the HKCEC site could meet the said requirements. He noted that whilst Wan Chai District Council had expressed objection to the proposed heliport development in the HKCEC site, the noise profile maps prepared by the Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group indicated that a heliport in the HKCEC site would result in lesser noise impact on nearby residents than the Sheung Wan site. Against this background, the remaining issue was more about the Government's stance on the need for reclamation estimated to be in the region of 1 500 m². In this respect, he queried why the Government was prepared to consider reclaiming about 20 hectares of land under WDII project but not 1 500 m² for the proposed heliport in the HKCEC site.

20. The Deputy Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) 1 said that the main purpose of the WDII project was to implement the Trunk Road project comprising the Central-Wan Chai Bypass. It was not the Government's intention to reclaim land for development purposes under the WDII. Any reclamation that might be incurred would depend on the alignment of the Trunk Road and all such reclamation would be incidental. The Government was consulting the general public on the types of harbour-front developments they aspired for at Wan Chai and the adjoining areas. This would provide useful input to the WDII Review. The Administration would ensure that any reclamation required would fully comply with the "overriding public need test" as stipulated by the CFA and would be kept to the minimum. He also clarified that the proposed helipad at the HKCEC site was included in a draft Wan Chai North Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) gazetted in 2002 but the draft OZP had been referred back to the Government for review.

21. Mr Jeffrey LAM said that in view of the continuing economic development and increasing integration in the PRD region, there was a need to plan for an easily

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accessible cross-boundary heliport in the CBD. Whilst noting the concern expressed by various deputations about the adverse noise impact of helicopter operations, he considered that there was a need to strike a proper balance, taking into account the economic benefits brought by the development. He further enquired about the possibility of incorporating commercial helicopter operations into the Government helipad planned at the HKCEC site, albeit the issue of reclamation which he considered could be dealt with separately.

22. DS/EDL(ED) referred members to the paper (LC Paper No. CB(1) 769/04-05(04), which set out the Administration's concerns on the proposal for a Government-cum-commercial heliport in the HKCEC site. The Deputy Secretary for Security (DS for S) added that the Security Bureau had no in principle objection to the shared-use of a heliport. The overriding consideration was that Government emergency and essential flying services would not be adversely affected. If the Government helipad at the HKCEC site were to be shared with commercial operators at its presently proposed scale, the interface between Government and commercial flights would likely give rise to practical problems adversely affecting the Government's efficiency in providing emergency services. However, the Security Bureau was prepared to consider the feasibility of shared-use if the development scale of the helipad was expanded. Regarding the movement statistics of the GFS, she said that the Administration had provided supplementary information to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 769/04-05(05). The numbers of emergency flights were 3 192 in 2003 and 2 550 in 2004.

23. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that there seemed to be a consensus in the community that there was a need to develop a heliport in either side of the harbour. What was at issue the choice of site. Having considered all the relevant factors, he considered that the best location was the HKCEC site, despite the need for harbour reclamation in the order of 1 500 m². Noting that the Wan Chai District Council objected to the proposed Government-cum-commercial heliport in the HKCEC site, he asked if the Administration had further discussed with the District Council, green groups, and Harbour-front Enhancement Committee on the HKCEC shared-use option. Regarding the suggestion of using roof-tops of buildings for landing and taking off, he said that this would create adverse noise impact to nearby residents. He also enquired why the District Council would support confining the interim heliport in Wan Chai to emergency use until the end of 2007.

24. DS/EDL(ED) replied that the Administration consulted the Wan Chai District Council on 18 January 2005. It explained to the District Council that the option of using roof-tops of buildings for landing and taking off was not feasible as most of the helicopters being used in Hong Kong were single-engine helicopters. For safety reasons, they could only be operated at dedicated surface level heliports. Regarding the HKCEC shared-use option, he said that if members had a consensus on the option, the Administration would be prepared to revisit the option. On the issue of reclamation, he said that any harbour reclamation must satisfy the "overriding public need" principle according to the ruling of the CFA. Given that there was already a suitable site available in Sheung Wan, the proposal of reclaiming another site to

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accommodate commercial helicopter services would not satisfy the said principle and would be susceptible to legal challenge by any member of the public.

25. Noting the Administration's reply, Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that as the legality of harbour reclamation could only be determined by the court rather than the Administration, the Administration's present position regarding the additional harbour reclamation required under the HKCEC shared-use option was only a presumption. DS/EDL(ED) clarified that in referring to the ruling of CFA, the Administration only intended to highlight the implications of the HKCEC shared-use option for members' consideration. If in the end, the decision for additional harbour reclamation was challenged by members of the public at court and thereby rebutted, the work for the project would become abortive.

26. Mr CHAN Kam-lam considered that in order to avoid wastage of public resources, the interim heliport in Wan Chai should be opened for shared-use by commercial operators and the Government. In the meantime, the Administration should continue to liaise with the district councils and concerned parties on the proposal to develop a permanent heliport at a suitable waterfront site.

27. DS/EDL(ED) clarified that at present, GFS was accommodated temporarily at the breakwater east of the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter. The Wan Chai District Council objected to the shared-use option at this interim heliport.

28. Referring to the planned Government helipad in the HKCEC site, Ms Miriam LAU enquired whether the Government's original plan involved reclamation or not. She also enquired whether the Administration had ever encountered any practical difficulties when the Central Heliport in Admiralty and the Fenwick Pier Street Heliport were made available for commercial use in the past.

29. DS/EDL(ED) referred members to paragraph 7 of LC Paper No. CB(1)760/04-05(04). He said that the original plan for the Government helipad at the HKCEC site, which was included in the draft Wan Chai OZP gazetted earlier, was under review. The GFS had recently reviewed the development parameters of the helipad. The land requirement could be reduced so that no reclamation would be required for designating one landing/take-off pad and one small pad for emergency parking only. Regarding the HKCEC shared-use option, he further explained that GFS' operational needs should not be viewed solely on the basis of their aircraft movements. Due to various operational reasons, there might be circumstances where the helipad would need to be blocked off for an extended period for the exclusive security use by the Government. This would affect commercial operators significantly. If the Administration were to develop a commercial heliport at the HKCEC site with a development scale similar to that of Sheung Wan, reclamation (estimated to be in the region of 1 500 m²) would be required to provide sufficient land for the additional landing and parking pads as well as necessary supporting facilities such as passenger lounge and refueling facility.

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30. Regarding the shared-use of the Central Heliport in Admiralty for commercial and Government operations, DS/EDL(ED) said that the situation in Central Heliport was quite different as two landing/take-off pads and three parking pads were available for commercial and Government use. DS for S added that the then Fenwick Pier Street Heliport was not used for emergency operations.

31. Mr Abraham SHEK was pleased to note that the Administration adopted an open attitude on the subject matter. In order to cater for the demand arising from the integration of the Greater PRD, there was an urgent need to develop a heliport in the urban areas for the overall benefit of Hong Kong. On the choice of site, he was in favour of the HKCEC site. This location was well away from residential areas. In view of the economic benefits associated with the heliport development in Hong Kong, he called on the Administration to explain the situation to Wan Chai District Council with a view to developing a commercial heliport in the HKCEC site for shared use by commercial heliport operator and the Government.

32. In view of the closer cooperation with the PRD region, Ir Dr Raymond HO considered that a cross-boundary Government-cum-commercial heliport in the HKCEC site should have been planned for in the first instance. He enquired about the constraints which barred the Administration from doing so.

33. DS/EDL(ED) said that the Administration was aware that the fast growing economic development of the PRD and its growing links with Hong Kong presented a virtually unexploited market for cross-boundary helicopter services with significant growth potential. This explained why the Administration put forward a proposal to the Panel last year for expanding the MFT heliport to cater for the demand for the next 20 years. The Administration intended to grant the right to develop and operate the heliport through a tenancy agreement (TA). The TA would be awarded through an open tender exercise. The Administration would proceed with the open tender exercise upon the completion of an Environmental Impact Assessment Study. Given that there was already a plan to expand the MFT for catering the demand for cross-boundary helicopter services, it would be a waste of resources if customs, immigration and quarantine facilities were again provided at the HKCEC site for operation of cross-boundary helicopter services.

34. Miss TAM Heung-man opined that the proposed heliport development should not involve any form of reclamation. She also enquired about the proposed development mode in respect of the proposed heliport in Sheung Wan.

35. DS/EDL(ED) said that the Administration intended to adopt the same tendering arrangement as that for the expansion of the cross-boundary heliport located at the MFT. In summary, the heliport would be developed and operated by the private sector under a TA to be awarded through an open tender. The tenant would develop the heliport at its own cost and operate the heliport for the common use of all helicopter operators on a fair and equal basis for a fixed period. The tenant would be permitted to collect charges from helicopter operators on a non-discriminatory basis.

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36. Mr Alan LEONG Kah-kit enquired about the Administration's assessment on the environmental and safety acceptability of the proposed heliport in Sheung Wan and whether the assessment criteria were in line with international standards.

37. DS/EDL(ED) replied that the Administration had commissioned a consultancy study on the project which had confirmed the technical feasibility of the site and that it would fulfill all the necessary environmental, structural and traffic requirements.

38. Mr Alan LEONG Kah-kit commented that the proposed site in Sheung Wan was quite close to residential areas. He asked what kind of mitigation measures would be put in place to ensure that the proposed development would meet all relevant environmental protection requirements.

39. DS/EDL(ED) replied that the layout of the heliport was designed to take advantage of the Western Park Sports Centre which was about 24 metres high as a natural noise barrier, thus minimizing the adverse noise impact on neighbouring land uses. Subject to the outcome of the present consultation, the Administration would conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment Study to ensure that the proposed development would meet all relevant statutory environmental requirements. Additional noise barriers could be provided, if required.

40. In reply to Dr David LI's queries regarding the way forward after listening to views expressed by different parties, DS/EDL(ED) said that the Administration would need to solicit members' view on the following before it could decide on the way forward:

- (a) Whether members considered it necessary to build a commercial domestic heliport in CBD?
- (b) Whether members would prefer the site in Sheung Wan or the HKCEC site for the purpose of heliport development?
- (c) Whether members would support reclamation for the purpose of developing a Government-cum-commercial domestic heliport at the HKCEC site?

41. Mr Howard YOUNG remarked that there seemed to be a consensus on the need to provide a heliport in the CBD, be it be used for domestic or cross-boundary services. He enquired whether the Administration had reviewed the design for a Government-cum-commercial heliport in the HKCEC site and come up with a proposal which did not involve reclamation.

42. DS/EDL(ED) said that the Administration had yet to revisit the design of the helipad in the HKCEC site, for allowing the shared use by commercial heliport operators and the Government, and at the same time satisfying the long term development need of the industry. He however pointed out that the shared-use of the single helipad in the HKCEC site without reclamation would severely constrain the

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future development and expansion of the commercial helicopter industry. It would also deprive the industry of the necessary supporting facilities such as refueling facilities that it deserved.

43. Mr Howard YOUNG indicated that he would move a motion, urging the Administration to speed up the planning for a commercial heliport in the HKCEC site. Taking into account the experience of the debate over Route 4 and South Hong Kong Island Line resulting in slippage of the delivery of both projects, the wording of the motion was drafted in such a way to avoid specifying that the heliport was intended for domestic or cross-boundary services.

44. The Chairman said that he would deal with the motion towards the end of this discussion session and direct the Clerk to table Mr YOUNG's motion for members' consideration.

45. Mr Albert CHAN remarked that there was a consensus among members to develop a commercial heliport in CBD. The question was merely the location of the heliport. As regards whether the development of heliport could involve reclamation, he said that members' views could not take precedence over the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance and the "overriding public need test" as stipulated by the CFA. In his view, harbour reclamation for the development of a commercial heliport in the HKCEC site would certainly fail to meet the "overriding public need" test. To avoid abortive work, the Administration should only opt for the without-reclamation option. He also enquired about the forecast demand for cross-boundary helicopter services. Given the lead time for developing a heliport in CBD, he suggested that the Administration could consider using aircraft carrier for the purpose. Supporting services could also be provided at the lower deck of aircraft carrier. This would speed up the delivery time of helipad facilities, was cost-effective and saved the need for harbour reclamation.

46. DS/EDL(ED) clarified that the Administration's view was that the additional harbour reclamation for the purpose of accommodating commercial helicopter services would not satisfy the "overriding public need" principle under the CFA's ruling. However, there had been suggestions that the Administration should explore the feasibility of the reclamation option. It was on this basis that the Administration highlighted the consequence of the reclamation option which might lead to abortive work for members' information.

47. On the demand for cross-boundary helicopter services, DS/EDL(ED) said that there was already plan to expand the heliport facilities in MFT to meet the short-term and long-term demand for cross-boundary helicopter services. In the long-term, a new heliport on the roof-top of the proposed cruise terminal at the tip of the ex-Kai Tak runway could be further pursued. Mr Albert CHAN remarked that the cross-boundary heliport should be located at CBD.

48. Mr KWONG Chi-kin pointed out that it was unlikely that the additional harbour reclamation for the purpose of developing a heliport in the HKCEC site would

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satisfy the “overriding public need test” as stipulated by the CFA. The Administration should therefore drop the reclamation option for heliport development which would be subject to challenge causing abortive work in the end.

Motion

49. Mr Howard YOUNG proposed to move the following motion:

“本委員會促請政府加快提供在市區內的永久商用直升機設施，並容許會展選址可以商業與政府共用。”

50. The Chairman ruled that the motion was directly related to the agenda item under discussion. Members agreed to proceed with the motion.

51. Mr Howard YOUNG said that the term “市區內” actually referred to CBD on Hong Kong Island. To allow flexibility, he did not specify the types of commercial usage of the heliport (i.e. domestic or cross-boundary) in his motion. As to whether there was a need for harbour reclamation for the purpose of developing a heliport in the HKCEC site, he would leave it to the Administration for further consideration. If reclamation was considered not feasible, the Administration could explore other means to achieve the HKCEC shared-use option.

52. Mr Jeffrey LAM said that the commercial heliport should be developed in CBD. Given that the alternative of using roof-tops of buildings for landing and take-off incurred higher operating costs, the Administration should consider the implications carefully.

53. Mr Patrick LAU said that he was in support of the need to develop a commercial heliport in CBD but not Sheung Wan. However, the proposed development must not involve reclamation.

54. Mr Abraham SHEK indicated that he was in support of the motion moved by Mr Howard YOUNG. However, the HKCEC shared-use option could not simply be ruled out by the Administration on the ground that it involved reclamation. The Administration should undertake further study and come up with a feasible solution for taking forward the project.

55. Mr SIN Chung-kai remarked that he concurred with the Government’s view that the additional harbour reclamation for the development of a heliport along the waterfront could not satisfy the “overriding public need test” as stipulated by the CFA. Unless the Administration could reclaim land under WDII and set aside a certain portion of the reclaimed land for the development of a heliport in the HKCEC site, he could not support a heliport project which on its own required reclamation. In the short-term, it would be desirable if the shared-use option of heliport facility could be materialized. He also indicated that he would not support the proposed heliport development in Sheung Wan. He would reserve his position on the proposed heliport

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development in the HKCEC site, pending the outcome of whether reclamation was necessary. If the intention of Mr YOUNG's motion was simply asking the Administration to identify a suitable heliport to allow for shared-use by commercial helicopter operators and the Government, he would support the motion. Other than this intent, he could hardly support the motion.

56. Mr CHAN Kam-lan said that in order to give a clear indication to the Administration, he considered it necessary to amend the wording of Mr YOUNG's motion to reflect members' intent that a permanent commercial heliport should be constructed at the HKCEC site for shared use by commercial helicopters and the Government. If subsequently, the court ruled that additional reclamation was not allowed, the Administration could consider other options.

57. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that he proposed to move an amendment to specify that the term “市區” referred to CBD on Hong Kong Island.

58. Mr Albert CHAN indicated that he proposed to move an amendment to Mr YOUNG's motion to the effect that the proposed heliport development should be carried out under the principle of no reclamation.

59. Ms CHOY So-yuk indicated that she proposed to move an amendment to Mr CHAN Kam-lan's amendment to the effect that the proposed heliport development at the HKCEC site should be carried out under the principle of no reclamation.

60. Mr Ronny TONG expressed concern that as a number of amendments were proposed and they were not set out in writing, it was very difficult for members to take position on the motion and the amendments at this juncture. It would also be very difficult for members to come to a consensus view on all the three questions raised by the Administration in paragraph 40 under one motion. He was worried that in the end, the motion and the amendments would be negated due to divergent views among members on different elements of the motion. In his view, if the scope of the motion could be confined to the need to have a heliport in CBD for shared use by commercial operators and the Government, it would be more acceptable to members. Subject to the passage of the motion, the Chairman could then invite members' views on whether the site should be in Sheung Wan or HKCEC, and whether they supported reclamation for the heliport development.

61. At 10:45 am, the Chairman said that as the meeting had already overrun for 15 minutes, there would not be sufficient time to deal with Mr YOUNG's motion and the amendments moved by members at the meeting. The Chairman suggested and members agreed to deal with the remaining issues at a special meeting on 28 February 2005, from 10:00 am to 10:30 am (i.e prior to the regular meeting of the Panel on Economic Services scheduled for the same day).

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III Any other business

62. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:45 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 March 2005