

For discussion
on 24 October 2005

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

Proposed Domestic Heliport Development

Introduction

At the joint-Panel meeting on 25 July 2005, Members were briefed on the proposed development of a Government helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) to accommodate both Government and commercial uses, and the Government's plan to conduct further public consultation. This paper reports the outcome of consultation and recommends the way forward.

Background

2. The proposed development of a permanent domestic heliport was first discussed by the Panel on Economic Services at its meeting on 7 December 2004, and later jointly with the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works at three subsequent meetings separately held on 31 January, 28 February and 25 July 2005. Members passed a motion to urge the Government to expedite the provision of a permanent commercial heliport and associated facilities in the Central Business District (CBD) of the Hong Kong Island, and, under the principle of no unlawful reclamation, allow the heliport at the HKCEC to accommodate both commercial uses by helicopter operators and government uses.

3. Taking on board Members' views, a development proposal on shared-use of the Government helipad at the HKCEC was put forward at the last meeting on 25 July 2005 (c.f. Panel paper - LC Paper No CB(1) 2099/04-05(01) Annex B, reproduced at Annex A). Members generally welcomed the Administration's positive response to Members' views. In response to Members' concern over the capacity of the Government's proposal, we reassured Members that the Government helipad would provide sufficient capacity to meet forecast demand for domestic helicopter services up to 2020. As regards the need to meet the potential demand for cross-boundary helicopter services, Members also noted that the Government's plan was for any such traffic growth to be met by the expansion of the existing cross-boundary heliport at Macau Ferry Terminal, over which the Panel on Economic Services supported at its meeting on 15 January 2004.

Annex B

4. At the last meeting, Members also discussed a proposal put forward by the Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group (HKRHWP) to develop a heliport of a much larger scale involving the use of floating pontoon covering an area of about 2,600m² of the Victoria Harbour adjacent to the ferry pier at the HKCEC (at Annex B). Noting that the Administration would further consult the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC), the Islands District Council (IsDC), the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) and the Town Planning Board (TPB) on the helipad proposal, the Joint-Panel decided that they would give further consideration to the matter when the outcome of public consultation is available.

Public Consultation

5. Both the Government and HKRHWG presented their respective proposals to the HEC Sub-committee on Wan Chai Development Phase II (WDII) Review on 9 August 2005, the Islands District Council (IsDC) on 22 August 2005 and the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) on 20 September 2005. The Government further sought the views of the Town Planning Board (TPB) at its meeting on 7 October 2005. Views received are set out below.

6. The HEC Sub-committee on WDII Review did not support HKRHWG's proposal as the Sub-committee considered that the expansive scale of the project would take away a valuable part of the Victoria Harbour. The Sub-committee decided that HKRHWG's proposal should not be pursued further in the on-going consultation under the Harbour-front Enhancement Review (HER) covering Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and adjoining areas. On the other hand, the Sub-committee agreed that further public views should be sought on the Government's proposal which should be included in the outline concept plan to be prepared for the next stage of the public engagement exercise under HER. In addition to the HKCEC site, the Sub-committee also considered that the existing temporary Government helipad at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area (PCWA) could be a possible site for developing a permanent helipad and should also be included in the outline concept plan for further public engagement by end 2005. The consultation results are expected to provide a basis for establishing consensus on the preliminary development proposals for the harbour-front.

7. The IsDC considered that regardless of the location and scale of development, their primary concern was to ensure that the shared-use arrangement would not adversely affect the provision of emergency helicopter services by Government Flying Service (GFS). We had reassured the IsDC that appropriate operational procedures would be drawn up to ensure priority use by GFS at all times.

8. At an earlier meeting on 21 May 2004, the WCDC passed a motion objecting to the opening of the existing temporary Government helipad at Wan Chai to commercial uses. At its meeting on 18 January 2005, the WCDC maintained that the proposed Government helipad at the HKCEC should only be used for providing GFS's services and objected to shared-use of the helipad. When the Government and HKRHWG consulted WCDC on their respective proposals on 20 September 2005, the WCDC passed another motion to reiterate their objection to shared-uses of the Government helipad and added that the subject should only be reviewed when overall planning for the development of the Wan Chai harbour-front had been completed.

9. The TPB noted that the proposed Government helipad was a permitted use according to the draft Wan Chai North Outline Zoning Plan. Some Members expressed concerns about the possible noise and traffic implications on the neighboring areas arising from shared-use of the helipad with commercial operators. We responded that those issues would be examined in detail and mitigation measures identified in the technical feasibility study to be conducted. Some Members also raised questions on the rationale for selecting the HKCEC site, the capacity of the helipad in catering for commercial uses and the GFS's operation of emergency services. We had addressed these questions accordingly at the meeting.

Way Forward

10. In all past discussions held on this subject at previous Panel / Joint-Panel meetings, Members generally agree that Hong Kong urgently needs a permanent facility for the operation of commercial helicopter services within the CBD. In this regard, the HKCEC site planned for the Government helipad is readily available for development as it has already been zoned "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Helipad" under the currently effective draft Wan Chai North Outline Zoning Plan. Also, the Government's proposed helipad would not involve any reclamation.

11. We will now -

- (a) proceed to conduct a technical feasibility study and detailed design on the proposed Government helipad at HKCEC which is a prerequisite, as in other infrastructural projects, to establish the proposal's feasibility and to provide details about the design and any environmental impact of the project to address issues that have been raised in public discussions. The technical feasibility study is estimated to cost around \$4.5 million and should be completed by the end of 2006; and

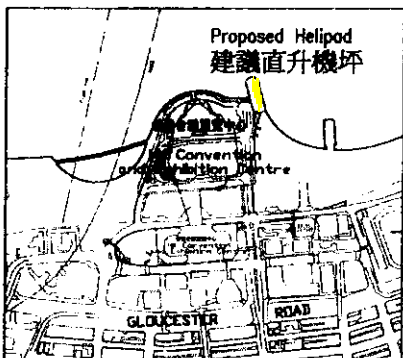
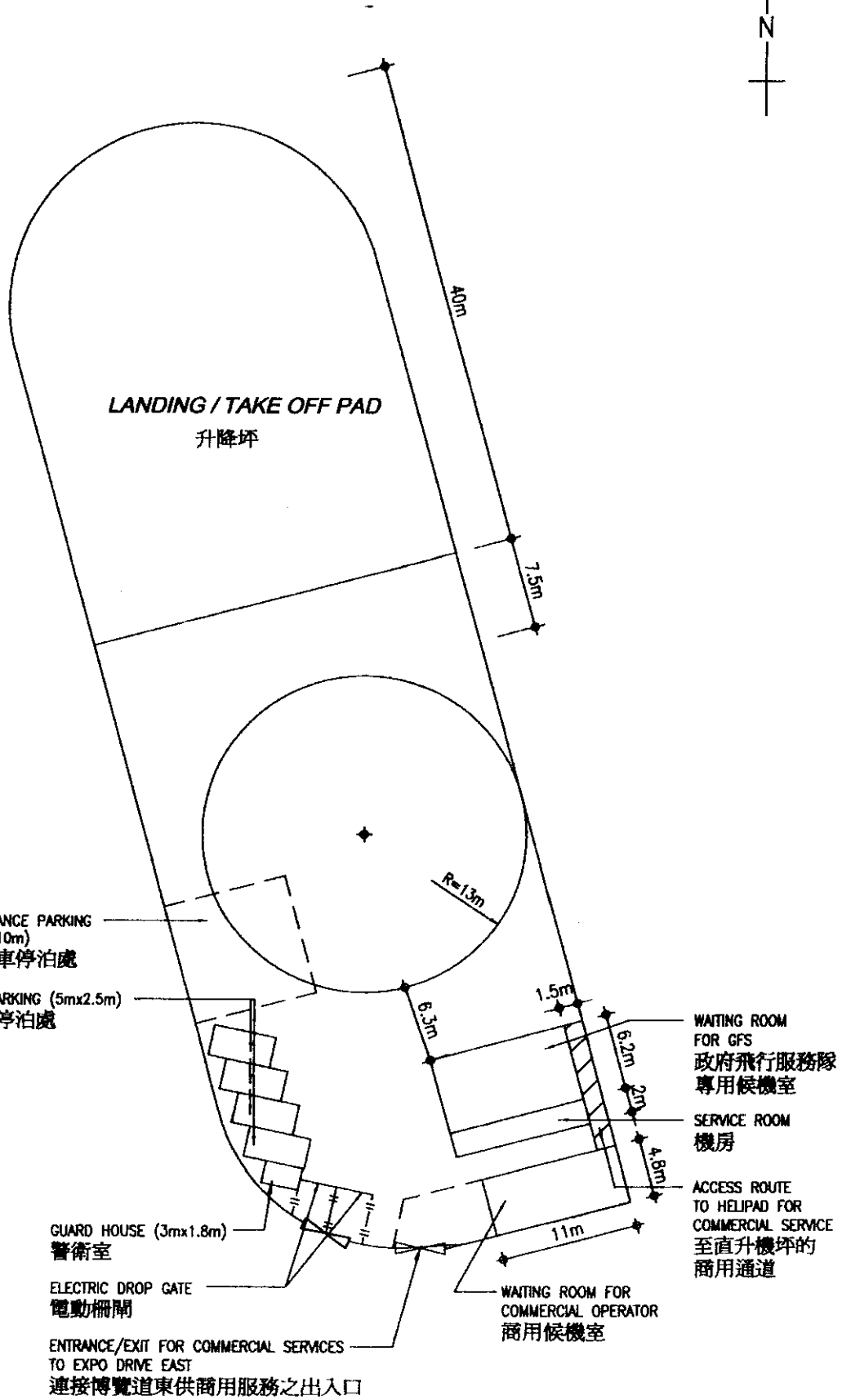
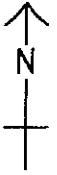
- (b) in parallel, we will keep in view the public engagement programme under HEC's HER project, which we understand is scheduled to complete in mid-2006. We will take into account the outcome of the technical feasibility study, detailed design and any further views arising from the HER consultations before putting the funding proposal for the proposed project to the Joint-Panel and then the Public Works Sub-committee and the Finance Committee for consideration.

12. Members are invited to note the results of public consultation and give their views on our recommended way forward above.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau
Security Bureau
18 October 2005

Proposed Layout of the Government Helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center
香港會議展覽中心旁之政府直升機坪設計草圖

Scale 1: 500



KEY PLAN
NOT TO SCALE



GENERAL INFORMATION

Annex B
附錄 B

