

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Operation of Taxis and Light Goods Vehicles at the Airport

Purpose

This paper sets out the latest progress of the traffic management measures recently implemented for light goods vehicles (“LGVs”) and taxis at the airport by the Administration.

Background

2. In view that some LGVs and taxis carry out illegal transport activities in the airport area, such as Car Parks No. 1 and 4 near the airport passenger terminal, the Police have been taking enforcement actions against them. These activities have aroused much public concern since last year. This is because not only that they are illegal, they cause conflicts within the taxi trade as well as between the taxi trade and different transport trades.

3. The Legislative Council Panel on Transport (“the Panel”) discussed the operation of LGVs and taxis at the airport in March 2006. The Panel requested the Administration and the Airport Authority (“AA”) to further implement administrative measures with a view to strengthening the efforts in combatting the illegal transport activities. Since April 2006, the Administration and AA have examined the feasibility of introducing new traffic management measures at the airport and conducted consultation exercises with a view to implementing the new measures set out in paragraph 4 below.

Traffic Management Measures at the Airport

4. The traffic management measures concerned include the provision of a new loading and unloading area for the exclusive use of LGVs and the prohibition of access of LGVs and taxis to some car parks at the airport. Details are as follows –

- (a) A new loading and unloading area next to the Government Car Park at the airport is provided for LGVs;
- (b) The new loading and unloading area is divided into loading area and unloading area. LGVs should leave the respective area immediately after loading or unloading;
- (c) Roads within this area are designated as 24-hour prohibited zones except the loading and unloading bays;
- (d) LGVs using the loading or unloading area are charged on entering the area. \$40 is charged for the first 30 minutes, \$60 for the next 30 minutes and \$80 for every subsequent 30 minutes. The fee level is the same as that for the existing goods loading and unloading area beside the passenger terminal;
- (e) LGVs and taxis are both prohibited from using Car Parks No. 1, 2 (opened in February 2007) and 4 at the airport. LGV and taxi drivers who need to park their vehicles can make use of Car Park No. 3 (formerly known as “Car Park No. 5”) at the airport at an hourly rate of \$16. The fee level is the same as that for other car parks at the airport; and
- (f) The loading and unloading area next to the passenger terminal is used exclusively by goods vehicles of the tenants of the passenger terminal and their suppliers. Other LGVs have to use the new loading and unloading area for loading and unloading activities.

5. The above measures will not affect LGVs conducting legitimate freight business at the airport since they can continue to use the loading/unloading facilities and parking areas provided by the airport at the same charge. The taxi trade can continue to operate and park their vehicles at the existing taxi stands, other pick up/drop off points and Car Park No. 3 at the airport. Passengers can continue to use the various transport services provided at the airport to travel to and from the airport.

6. On the other hand, prohibiting the use of Car Parks No. 1, 2 and 4 by LGVs and taxis will help reduce the chance of conducting illegal activities (such as soliciting or carriage of passengers for hire or reward) by taxis and LGVs. It can also help the Police and AA to concentrate their resources for monitoring and making more focused inspections against these activities at the airport.

Consultation with the LGV and Taxi Trades

7. All along, the Administration has maintained communication with the LGV and taxi trades and consulted them on the new measures in April, May and September 2006. After considering the trades' views, we briefed the Panel on the details of the measures on 24 November 2006. In accordance with the legislative procedures, AA introduced amendments to the prohibited and restricted zones at the airport in May 2007 by notice in the Gazette in order to prohibit LGVs and taxis from using Car Parks No. 1, 2 and 4 at the airport. Relevant amendments were submitted to the Legislative Council to facilitate implementation of the transport management measures concerned on 14 July 2007.

8. In early July 2007, we arranged a site visit to the new LGV loading and unloading area for the LGV trade representatives and briefed them again on the details of the new measures. We have also explained to the taxi trade representatives the details of the new measures and the pick up and drop off points at the airport for pre-booked taxis. In parallel, AA has issued a press release to announce details of the measures and the implementation date. AA has also distributed publicity leaflets to passengers and drivers of the two trades at the airport and provided the relevant information on its website.

Requests from Individual Members of the LGV and Taxi Trades

9. The new measures came into effect on 14 July 2007. On the same day, individual members of the LGV trade requested for removal of the prohibition on LGVs at Car Parks No. 1 and 4 at the airport, reduction of the charges for using the LGV loading and unloading area as well as improving

the facilities of that area.

10. As for the taxi trade, individual trade members providing pre-booked taxi service at the airport reflected on the same day that they had difficulty in adapting to the new measures. On the same evening, a few representatives of them demanded that the area near the airport passenger terminal should be re-opened for pre-booked taxis to pick up their passengers. Subsequently, during the discussion between the Transport Department (“TD”) and these individual members, a blockage to the traffic to and from the airport by more than 200 taxis occurred. TD, AA and Police negotiated with these trade representatives and only agreed to make available a temporary taxi pick up and setting down arrangement outside Car Park No. 4. This temporary arrangement started from 15 July and would be subject to a review within seven days. On the other hand, other members of the taxi trade objected to the temporary pick up and drop off arrangement for pre-booked taxis outside Car Park No. 4.

Government’s Stance

11. We have carefully considered the requests from those members of the LGV trade. Their requests for removing the prohibited zone restrictions in Car Parks No. 1 and 4 at the airport and reducing the charge for using the LGV loading and unloading area go against the intention of the measures concerned to combat illegal transport activities at the airport. We therefore do not support their proposals. As for the proposal to improve the facilities of the LGV loading and unloading area, we will carefully consider the issue. To facilitate goods handling, AA will firstly carry out road improvement works to smoothen the road surface.

12. As for the pick up and drop off arrangement for taxis outside Car Park No. 4 which is temporary in nature, TD discussed this with the taxi trade on 19 July 2007. TD pointed out that the Administration decided to cease this temporary measure at 12 noon of 22 July 2007, and that all LGVs and taxis would continue to be prohibited from using Car parks No. 1 and 4. Taxis in need, such as taxis providing pre-booked services, can operate and park at Car Park No. 3 at the airport. Majority of the taxi trade members at the meeting supported the Administration to continue implementing these

measures to combat illegal transport activities. AA will also erect directional signs so that both drivers and passengers can clearly know the location of Car park No.3, the suggestion on improving some facilities at Car park No. 3 will also be considered.

Way Forward

13. The Administration, in collaboration with Police and AA, will closely monitor the implementation of the series of traffic management measures at the airport and maintain communication with the trades.

Transport and Housing Bureau
Transport Department
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