

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1268/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EDEV/1

Panel on Economic Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 25 February 2008, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHIM Pui-chung
Hon TAM Heung-man
- Member attending** : Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Vincent FANG Kang, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Hon KWONG Chi-kin

- Public officers attending** : Agenda Item IV
- Mr Esmond LEE
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)
- Mr Francis CHENG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)
- Ms Manda CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for Security
- Mr Y K LEUNG
Deputy Director-General for Civil Aviation
- Mr Bosco CHAN
Chief Engineer/Hong Kong (2)
Civil Engineering and Development Department
- Mr C K LAM
Senior Engineer / Project Management
Civil Engineering and Development Department
- Captain West WU
Senior Pilot
Government Flying Service
- Attendance by invitation** : Agenda Item IV
- Maunsell Consultants Asia Ltd
- Mr Eric MA
Managing Director
- Mr Peter CHEEK
Technical Director
- Miss Carmen AU
Principal Engineer
- Clerk in attendance** : Ms Connie SZETO
Chief Council Secretary (1)6

Staff in attendance : Ms Debbie YAU
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Ms Michelle NIEN
Legislative Assistant (1)9

Action

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

(LC Paper No. CB(1)847/07-08 - Minutes of meeting held on
21 December 2007)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2007 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)765/07-08(01) - Tables and graphs showing the
import and retail prices of major
oil products from January 2006
to December 2007 furnished by
the Census and Statistics
Department)

2. Members noted the above information paper issued since the last regular meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)825/07-08(01) - List of outstanding items for
discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)825/07-08(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following three items proposed by the Administration at the next meeting to be held on 17 March 2008 at 8:30 am:

- (a) Hotel development proposal of the Ocean Park;
- (b) Pilotage (Dues) (Amendment) Order 2008; and
- (c) An aviation item.

4. On 3(a), members requested the Administration to provide in its paper information related to the supply of hotel rooms and land supply for hotel development as follows:

- (a) The existing occupancy rates of hotels in Hong Kong and vicinity places, and forecast growth in demand in the next few years;

- (b) The existing and forecast supply on hotel rooms in Hong Kong and vicinity places in the next few years;
- (c) Details on the land applied for hotel development in Hong Kong in the past five years with forecast in provision of rooms under the concerned projects, present positions of the projects, and expected timing for completion;
- (d) Land available in the existing List of Sites for Sale by Application (the Application List) for hotel development, and land to be included for such development in the new Application List; and
- (e) Other measures to gauge the need for land supply for hotel development, for example, through designating land in the Application List for hotel development and streamlining the approval procedures for hotel development projects.

IV Proposed shared-use of the Government helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre with commercial operators

(LC Paper No. CB(1)825/07-08(03) - Administration's paper on proposed development of Government helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

LC Paper No. CB(1)825/07-08(04) - Paper on the proposed shared-use of the Government helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre with commercial operators prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)910/07-08
(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 25 February 2008*) - Administration's paper on proposed Government helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (power-point presentation materials))

Presentation by the Consultant

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) (DS/TH) briefed members on the background to the proposed shared-use of the Government helipad at the north-eastern corner of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC). He outlined that after a site search, the proposed site at HKCEC was considered the most suitable for a permanent

Government helipad. Taking into account the motion passed at the joint Panel meeting on 25 February 2005 and the views of the helicopter service industry (the industry), the Administration agreed to allow the helipad to accommodate both Government and commercial uses, on condition that Government emergency and other essential flying services must have absolute priority at all times in using the helipad. With the aid of power-point, Mr Eric MA, Managing Director of Maunsell Consultants Asia Ltd then briefed members on the key findings and recommendations of the technical feasibility study (the Study) of the proposed helipad at HKCEC as follows:

(a) *Noise Impact Assessment*

As the proposed helipad was more than 300 meters (m) from any existing or planned residential development, it was not a Designated Project under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499). The Study had examined the noise impact caused by the helicopter operations at the helipad on the surrounding areas, including the Causeway Centre and the Golden Bauhinia Square (GBS). The Study found that the noise levels at both places were below the noise criteria specified in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and under the World Health Organization guidelines respectively. Nevertheless, to lessen noise impact, the Study had recommended the installation of a 6-m high noise barrier along the landward side of the boundary of the proposed helipad site and the integration of a noise-mitigating landscaped buffer zone with the existing planter boxes along the existing HKCEC Promenade.

(b) *Downwash effect*

The Study assessed that the wind speed generated by the downwash of a helicopter operating at the outer pad of the proposed helipad would dissipate to the open sea area between the Promenade and the outer pad under the two most usual wind conditions (i.e. easterly and westerly wind). With the installation of the proposed noise barrier mentioned in (a) above and given the location of the helipad site, the wind speed generated by the downwash of a helicopter operating at the inner pad or outer pad would be reduced to an acceptable level right outside the boundary of the helipad site or at GBS. Members of the public at the Promenade and GBS were unlikely to be exposed to adverse downwash from helicopter operations at the proposed helipad.

(c) *Hazard assessment of underground refueling facilities*

The refueling facilities at the proposed helipad would consist of a 30 000-litre underground aviation refueling tank and other equipment. The Study had included a hazard assessment of such facilities, conducted in accordance with the methodology described in

"Dispensing Petrol – HS(G)146", and concluded that the risks would be low.

(d) *Helipad layout*

The Study examined three options of the general layout of the proposed helipad, with the above-mentioned mitigation measures incorporated. Taking account of the general operational requirements, the impact on pedestrian linkage and the visual impact, the Study recommended the helipad layout as shown in Figure 6 at the Annex to the information paper, i.e. with the outer pad as the landing and takeoff pad, the middle pad as the takeoff pad and the inner pad as the parking pad.

6. Members noted that the Town Planning Board had endorsed the inclusion of the helipad site in the draft Wan Chai North Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) which was gazetted on 27 July 2007. They also noted that the Administration planned to brief the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) on the findings and recommendations of the Study in March 2008. After briefing WCDC and with the approval of OZP by the Chief Executive in Council (the CE in C), the Administration would seek Members' support for the funding proposal for the proposed helipad before submitting it to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and the Finance Committee (FC) for approval by mid-2008.

Discussion

Proposed shared-use of the Government helipad at HKCEC

7. While expressing the support of the Liberal Party for developing the proposed helipad at HKCEC, Mr James TIEN was concerned about the forecast number of commercial flights using the helipad. As the proposed helipad would only provide domestic helicopter service, the demand from commercial flights would be small with purposes mainly confined to local tourism and therefore it might not be necessary to accord absolute priority to the Government Flying Service (GFS) at all times in using the helipad. As such, Mr TIEN suggested that the Administration should provide information on the estimated number of Government and commercial flights at the proposed helipad. Mr Howard YOUNG also indicated his support in principle for the proposed helipad at HKCEC.

8. Mr Andrew LEUNG expressed support for the proposed shared-use arrangement as the project could benefit the overall economy of Hong Kong. However, while agreeing that GFS's emergency flying services should have absolute priority in using the helipad, he shared Mr James TIEN's concern about whether GFS's non-emergency services should have absolute priority in using the helipad and how the co-ordination between GFS and commercial operators would be worked out. To sustain the operation of the industry at the proposed helipad, Mr LEUNG considered that the Administration should define clearly the respective scope of GFS's "emergency flying services" and "essential flying services".

Moreover, it was necessary for the Administration to work out details of the shared-use arrangement with the industry in an open and transparent manner.

9. Mr Albert CHAN expressed disappointment towards the present proposal which failed to address commercial concerns. Noting that the former Central Helipad at Admiralty also accommodated uses by both GFS and commercial helicopter service operators without giving priority to services by GFS, Mr CHAN queried why the Administration had put forward the present shared-use proposal under which GFS had absolute priority at all times in using the proposed helipad at HKCEC. He noted with concern that there were cases whereby some user departments had abused the so-called emergency services.

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10. While considering that the proposed shared-use proposal was undesirable, Ms Miriam LAU nevertheless opined that it was a better than nothing arrangement which had to be accepted. She agreed that the respective scope of "emergency" and "essential" flying services of GFS should be clearly defined and stressed the need to work out with the industry a set of reasonable and practicable operational procedures that could meet the needs of both parties. In this connection, Ms LAU requested the Administration to provide details of the shared-use arrangement and how it would be worked out.

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11. In response, DS/TH advised that the Administration had been liaising with the industry including the Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group (HKRHWG) on the proposed shared-use arrangement. As regards the demand and types of commercial domestic helicopter flights, he said from January to October 2007, there were about 2 450 commercial helicopter movements in Hong Kong with various purposes, including sightseeing, commercial photo-taking etc. On the concern about providing absolute priority to GFS in using the helipad, DS/TH stressed that the importance of Government emergency services could not be compromised and made secondary to commercial operation. He however pointed out that according to past experience, GFS usually operated about 6 to 7 flights daily. As such, he believed that there should be adequate room to cater for commercial use at the proposed helipad at HKCEC. Regarding the detailed operational procedures under the shared-use arrangement, the Administration would continue discussion with the industry including HKRHWG to work out mutually acceptable arrangements. It was envisaged that GFS, which would assume the overall management responsibility for the helipad, would maintain daily contact with the co-ordinator of the commercial domestic helicopter service providers to ensure satisfactory modus operandi of the helipad catering for and facilitating the uses of both parties. He also took note of members' views on the need to define "emergency" and "essential" flying services provided by GFS.

Admin

12. To enable members to better understand the utilization of the proposed helipad at HKCEC by GFS and commercial helicopter service providers, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the respective numbers of GFS and commercial flights using the closed Central Helipad, the closed temporary helipad at West Kowloon Region, and the existing temporary helipad at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area (PCWA), with a

breakdown on the purposes of the flights, user departments involved, and the projected growth in respect of GFS and commercial flights in the future.

13. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed grave concern on the Administration's approach in developing the proposed helipad at HKCEC. He pointed out that the present proposal with absolute priority use given to GFS would greatly restrict commercial uses of the helipad and had failed to reflect the spirit of the motion passed at the joint Panel meeting. He said that such a proposal could not gain the support of LegCo.

Admin

14. Mr Albert CHENG declared interest that he was a member of the helicopter service industry. Pointing out that he had not been consulted on the present proposal, Mr CHENG queried why the Administration had to re-provision the permanent Government helipad within the Central Business District (CBD). He further opined that to meet the need of providing emergency services by GFS, the Government could at all times make use of the facilities at private helipads.

15. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Security explained the reasons for re-provisioning a permanent Government helipad at the proposed site at the north-eastern corner of HKCEC. She said that one of GFS's emergency services was casualty evacuation involving the delivery of patients from outlying islands to hospitals on Hong Kong Island for medical treatment. Amongst the present hospitals on Hong Kong Island, only Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (the Eastern Hospital) had a rooftop helipad. However, helicopter operation at this helipad might be precluded by adverse weather conditions. Moreover, in order to minimize the noise impact of helicopter operations to nearby residents, GFS's use of this helipad was limited to casualty evacuation of patients suffering from life or limb threatening conditions, as previously agreed with the Eastern District Council. A permanent Government helipad at the proposed site was therefore needed to ensure efficient and effective delivery of patients to hospitals without a helipad or when other conditions as explained above did not permit GFS's direct delivery of the patients to hospitals with a helipad. GFS was also required to provide flying support to the Police's operations for law enforcement and maintaining law and order. In selecting the proposed site, consideration had been given to its close proximity to the Police Headquarters to facilitate speedy air delivery of police officers and equipment to other parts of the territory for handling emergencies and security-related situations. In addition, the proposed site could provide two obstacle-free take-off climb and approach surfaces, separated by not less than 150 for helicopter take-off and landing, thus meeting aviation safety requirements. Moreover, as the selected site at HKCEC was relatively distant from residential developments, the noise impact created by helicopter operations on residents could be minimized.

16. In reply to further enquiry from the Chairman, the Senior Pilot of GFS supplemented that as the helipad at the Eastern Hospital was situated at the rooftop of a building of about 400 to 500 feet high, landing at this helipad would be difficult in particular during adverse weather conditions. Under these circumstances, the existing temporary helipad at the former Wan Chai PCWA and

the future HKCEC helipad would serve as an alternate helipad to facilitate casualties transfer to hospitals. In the past, GFS helicopters transferring casualties from the outlying islands used to land on the Central Helipad where casualties were taken to nearby hospitals by ambulances. After the closure of the Central Helipad, GFS had been using the present temporary helipad at the former Wan Chai PCWA. There were stringent procedures and guidelines with the Hospital Authority and the Fire Services Department in respect of casualty transfer at the temporary helipad. Accordingly, casualties would be transferred to either the Eastern Hospital or other hospitals on Hong Kong Island by ambulances.

17. Mr Albert CHENG did not subscribe to the Administration's explanations above. He queried how GFS could tell whether the casualties to be transferred from the outlying islands were in life-critical conditions or not in deciding whether to use the helipad near the Eastern Hospital. He further pointed out that GFS was seldom involved in handling security-related emergency situations and the proposed site at HKCEC was not a convenient location as it was far away from both the Eastern Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital. In this connection, he also queried why the Government had given up the previously identified site at the waterfront of Sheung Wan for re-provisioning the permanent Government helipad.

18. In reply to Mr CHAN Kam-lam's enquiry on the criteria for setting the charges for commercial helicopter service providers in using the helipad, DS/TH advised that the matter would be considered at a later stage after the Administration had secured funding support for the construction of the helipad. Nevertheless, he added that the charges would be set following the established practice and after discussion with the industry.

Layout of the helipad and future expansion

19. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed support in principle for the speedy development of a helipad for commercial use in CBD and considered the selected site at HKCEC suitable. He however expressed concern on the inadequacy of parking facilities for commercial helicopters at the helipad. In response, DS/TH explained that the helipad would consist of three pads with one landing and takeoff pad (the outer pad), one takeoff pad (the middle pad) and one parking pad (the inner pad). He added that the proposed layout had been worked out taking into account the safe operation of helicopters at the site, and operational needs of GFS and commercial helicopter service providers. Given the need to provide unobstructed service for GFS helicopters in carrying out emergency flying services round-the-clock, overnight parking at the helipad would not be allowed. The inner pad would be reserved for emergency parking and fuel-refill purposes only. He added that as understood from the helicopter service industry, parking facilities were available elsewhere for commercial helicopters.

20. To ensure the efficient utilization of the proposed helipad at HKCEC, Miss TAM Heung-man opined that commercial helicopters should be allowed to park on the helipad while awaiting their passengers unless clearance was necessary to cater for GFS operations. In response, DS/TH explained that GFS would

operate at the outer pad under normal circumstances. The inner pad was reserved as the parking pad for emergency use. During an emergency operation, it was important to maintain unobstructed through road in the pads to make way for the access of ambulances or fire engines to facilitate rescue. Hence, allowing parking of commercial helicopters could adversely affect GFS's operations.

21. Mr SIN Chung-kai was concerned whether the proposed site at HKCEC would have room for expansion in future and whether the Administration had discussed with the industry other possible layout options, such as providing more than one landing/takeoff pad, in order to optimize the use of the site.

22. DS/TH stressed that the Administration had maintained continuous communication with the industry including HKRHWG on the helipad layout. He said that the original design was basically a two-pad layout. Taking note of HKRHWG's views, the Consultant had been requested to examine the feasibility of providing a three-pad layout at the site. The Study had concluded that a three-pad layout was feasible. As regards further expansion of the helipad, DS/TH said that while there was no space for in-situ expansion, further expansion of the helipad would be possible subject to the availability of land in the vicinity, which was currently zoned as open space in OZP. Changes in land use zoning would be subject to necessary statutory procedures under the relevant legislation.

Views of the helicopter service industry

23. Notwithstanding the Administration's paper had stated that the industry generally supported the findings and the recommendations of the Study, Mr Fred LI noted that HKRHWG had expressed concern on the proposal. To address the need of the industry, Mr LI urged the Administration to consider alternative proposals in developing the helipad at HKCEC and revamping GBS, including re-examining the proposal put forward by HKRHWG of providing a four-pad helipad and developing a terminal building with retail and catering facilities for users and visitors.

24. In response, DS/TH re-iterated that the present three-pad layout was the optimal option in developing the helipad at HKCEC. He supplemented that the Administration had spared no efforts in identifying a suitable site for developing a permanent domestic helipad in CBD. All along, the Administration had maintained close liaison with the industry in gauging their views. The Administration had also conveyed the findings and recommendations of the Study to HKRHWG. HKRHWG was generally supportive of the Study's findings and recommendations.

25. At this juncture, Dr David LI raised objection and said that according to his understanding, the Administration had not consulted the industry. He also sought explanation from the Administration on why it had rejected the proposal put forward by Dr Michael KARDOORIE to develop a four-pad helipad at the site. In this connection, Mr Fred LI considered that given the concerns expressed by HKRHWG on the detailed layout and operational procedures of the proposed helipad, the Administration should take a more proactive attitude in addressing its

concerns and considering its views.

26. In response, DS/TH said that the Administration had been maintaining ongoing communication with HKHRWG through various channels including correspondence and discussion sessions. For instance, the Administration met with representatives of HKHRWG at a meeting held on 23 January 2008 to explain the findings and recommendations of the Study as well as to address possible concerns. Both sides had agreed to hold further discussion on the future shared-use arrangement in meeting the operational and stringent safety-related requirements. As regards the proposal put forward by Dr Michael KARDOORIE, DS/TH informed members that HKHRWG had raised objection to the Wan Chai North OZP and proposed to expand the proposed helipad at HKCEC to accommodate four pads. As far as he understood, the Town Planning Board had considered and rejected the proposal in January 2008 mainly on grounds that the proposal was in conflict with an open space zoning in the vicinity of GBS. As he noted from the Planning Department, OZP together with relevant views from HKHRWG would later be submitted for the consideration and approval of the CE in C.

Admin 27. Noting the importance for the Administration to maintain on-going communication with the relevant stakeholders in developing the proposed helipad at HKCEC, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide details of the consultation with the relevant parties and the industry on the proposed helipad at HKCEC, including the means through which the consultation had been conducted, the parties which had been consulted, their major views and concerns and the Administration's responses. He also urged the Administration to consider conducting more extensive consultation among the stakeholders including the transport and tourism sectors, relevant trade associations, as well as Government departments and other public bodies, e.g. the Hospital Authority, in developing the proposed helipad at HKCEC and other heliport facilities in Hong Kong. He also opined that, where necessary, the Panel might consider holding public hearings on the matter.

28. Ir Dr Raymond HO considered that the Administration's paper had failed to address the concerns raised by members at previous discussions on the subject and urged the Administration to provide more information to justify its present proposal. He further called on the Administration to maintain an open-mind in developing the proposed helipad and to examine possible options including relocating the "Monument in Commemoration of the Return of Hong Kong to China" at GBS to the Tamar site to make room for a bigger helipad at HKCEC, enhancing the link between GBS and the Central, or even exploring the feasibility of reclamation. In response, DS/TH stressed that the Town Planning Board had endorsed the inclusion of the helipad site in the OZP to be approved by the CE in C in due course. Any proposal on expansion of the site had to go through the relevant town planning procedures. He re-iterated that the present helipad layout comprising three pads had been worked out in consultation with the industry. As regards the suggestion of expanding the proposed site through reclamation, DS/TH said that according to the motion passed at the joint Panel meeting on 25 February 2005, the helipad

should be developed under the principle of no unlawful reclamation. As such, the Administration had not considered any proposal that required reclamation.

The development of domestic and cross-boundary heliport facilities in Hong Kong

29. Mr SIN Chung-kai was concerned that restriction on further expansion of the proposed helipad at HKCEC could hamper the development of the industry, in particular with forecast growing demand for the service in the next few years. Sharing the concern, Ms Miriam LAU was also concerned about the long-term development of domestic helipad facilities. In response, DS/TH advised that the proposed helipad at HKCEC could support up to 20 000 movements per year and would provide sufficient capacity to meet forecast demand for domestic helicopter service up to 2020.

30. Noting that it might take some years for completing the proposed helipad project at HKCEC, and with the closure of the temporary West Kowloon Heliport in December 2005, Mr SIN Chung-kai was concerned about the provision of commercial domestic helipad facilities in the interim. He enquired whether consideration would be given to open the temporary Government helipad at the former Wan Chai PCWA for commercial use.

31. DS/TH advised that during the consultation conducted in 2004, WCDC had objected to opening the temporary helipad at the former Wan Chai PCWA for commercial use. The suggestion made by Mr SIN Chung-kai would necessitate consultation with WCDC again, which was unlikely to gain the support of WCDC. DS/TH stressed that the Administration would endeavour to expedite development of the permanent helipad at HKCEC with a view to completing the project as soon as practicable. Mr Abraham SHEK pointed out that the Administration should consider consulting WCDC again as the DC had been reconstituted in end 2007. DS/TH confirmed that the Administration planned to consult WCDC on the findings and recommendations of the Study in March 2008.

32. Mr Albert CHAN requested to put on record his great disappointment at the slow development of heliport facilities in Hong Kong. Noting the robust growth in demand for both domestic and cross-boundary commercial heliport services in recent years, he opined that the development of the industry had been compromised by the Administration's slow action on the matter. In response, DS/TH explained that with the closure of the Central Helipad in January 2004, a site on the West Kowloon Region was identified for temporary use as a helipad for commercial domestic helicopter operators. However, the commercial operators had later on given up using the site and the helipad had ceased operation after 31 December 2005.

33. Notwithstanding that the Government had started a site search for the development of a permanent helipad as early as 1998, Mr CHAN Kam-lam pointed out that issues relating to the provision of domestic and cross-boundary heliport facilities remained un-resolved. In this regard, he expressed concern about the Government's policies and strategies for the development of domestic and

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cross-boundary heliport facilities. Mr Abraham SHEK also urged the Administration to formulate policy and plans in the medium- and long-term for the development of domestic and cross-boundary heliport facilities to meet the growing demand.

34. DS/TH said that the proposed Government helipad under consideration would be confined to domestic use. He said that the Government's original plan was to build a Government helipad at the north-eastern corner of HKCEC solely for GFS to provide emergency services and other essential flying services. After taking into account the motion passed at the joint Panel meeting on 25 February 2005 and having regard to the views of the industry, the Administration agreed to allow commercial helicopter operators to share the use of the helipad with the Government, on condition that the emergency and essential operations of GFS would have absolute priority. On the provision of cross-boundary heliport facilities, DS/TH said that the expansion of the cross-boundary heliport at Macau Ferry Terminal with a view to enhancing the handling capacity of the facilities therein was underway and was scheduled for completion in 2009. Separately, the Government had also announced in 2006 that a site adjacent to the new cruise terminal to be built at the Kai Tak Development Area was reserved for development of a second cross-boundary heliport for Hong Kong to facilitate the long-term development of cross-boundary helicopter service.

35. Noting the great business potential in developing cross-boundary helicopter service between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, Mr James TIEN enquired about the estimated timing for completing the proposed heliport at the Kai Tak Development Area.

36. On the proposed cross-boundary heliport at the Kai Tak Development Area, DS/TH confirmed that the required land for the development of heliport had been included in the Kai Tak OZP. According to the information provided by the Administration's engineering experts, the land would be made available for the said development in 2013 after completion of the associated works. He explained that the new cruise terminal and the proposed heliport would provide a synergy effect in stimulating development of the area and cruise and helicopter passengers could share-use the custom, immigration and quarantine services to be provided at the new cruise terminal building.

37. Mr Andrew LEUNG expressed grave concern on the slow development of the cross-boundary heliport in Kai Tak. Highlighting the importance of cross-boundary helicopter service to the economic development of the region, he urged the Administration to consider advancing the development of the heliport to tie-in with the commissioning of the new cruise terminal in 2012 in facilitating the provision of cross-boundary helicopter service to cruise passengers visiting the Mainland. Ms Miriam LAU shared the view and stressed the need for the Administration to commence planning and preparatory work for the heliport as soon as possible. Echoing the concern, Miss TAM Heung-man further urged the Administration to undertake a comprehensive review on the market demand for cross-boundary helicopter service with a view to formulating the development plan

in consultation with the industry. Mr Albert CHENG and Ir Dr Raymond HO also concurred that the development of the new cruise terminal and the cross-boundary heliport at Kai Tak should be carried out concurrently. Mr Abraham SHEK highlighted the long-term economic benefit to be brought to Hong Kong by the provision of cross-boundary helicopter service and urged the Administration to give prudent consideration to the matter to maximize the benefits to Hong Kong in the long run.

38. DS/TH took note of members' concerns. He recapped that the cross-boundary heliport at Kai Tak was part of the approved Kai Tak OZP and clarified that although the land in question would be available by 2013, the Administration had already started the preparations for the project. For instance, helicopter service providers were informed in end 2007 about the future development of the cross-boundary heliport at Kai Tak. The Administration would also closely monitor development in the market in gauging growth in demand particularly in respect of service to and from PRD region, and liaise with the industry in ascertaining the readiness of service providers. If necessary, the Administration was prepared to advance the preparations for the construction of the heliport.

Admin

39. To meet the forecast growth in demand for cross-boundary commercial helicopter service arising from rapid development in tourism and economic growth in PRD region, the Chairman requested the Administration to consider members' views in expediting the development of the proposed commercial heliport at Kai Tak to tie in with the development of cruise terminal the first berth of which would be available in 2012. Moreover, he also requested the Administration to provide details of Government's policy and plans in the medium- and long-term on the development of domestic and cross-boundary helipads in Hong Kong.

Way forward

40. Ir Dr Raymond HO expressed his disappointment at the Administration's briefing. In the absence of information addressing various concerns raised, he considered that the present proposal would unlikely be supported by PWSC and FC.

41. While pointing out that there was not much dispute on the development of a permanent domestic helipad in Hong Kong, Mr Albert CHAN observed that Panel members had expressed various concerns on the present proposal which needed to be addressed. As such, he did not support the Administration to submit the relevant funding proposal to PWSC at this stage.

42. DS/TH said that it was the Administration's plan to consult the relevant Panel(s) again after briefing WCDC in March 2008 on the findings and recommendations of the Study and with the approval of the Wan Chai North OZP by the CE in C. The consultation would take place before the project was submitted to PWSC and FC for funding approval.

43. Mr Albert CHAN remarked that the Administration should revert to the Panel before seeking the approval of the CE in C on the OZP. DS/TH explained that approval of the OZP was a process separate from the funding proposal for the proposed helipad. In this connection, Mr Abraham SHEK opined that the Administration should proceed with seeking approval for the OZP in accordance with existing procedures. He further requested the Administration to address various concerns raised by Panel members, consult the industry and provide detailed responses before briefing the Panel again.

44. Recapping members' concerns expressed at the meeting, the Chairman said that the Panel supported in general to expedite provision of a permanent commercial heliport in CBD but members had expressed concerns on the present proposal, including the proposed shared-use arrangement particularly the need to allow GFS absolute priority at all times in using the helipad, the size and layout design of the helipad, insufficient consultation with the relevant industries etc. To prepare for further discussion on the proposed Government helipad at HKCEC and address members' concerns, the Chairman requested the Administration to furnish information, consider and provide written response accordingly.

Admin

V Any other business

45. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:30 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
17 April 2008