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GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

LOWER ALBERT ROAD
HONG KONG

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Miss Josephine SO
Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Security
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss SO,

Development of Aberdeen Fire Station-cum-Ambulance Depot

At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Security on 3 November 2009, Members discussed the development of Aberdeen Fire Station-cum-Ambulance Depot for the Fire Services Department (FSD). The supplementary information requested by Members at the meeting is set out below:

The demand for fire and ambulance services and the future development in Aberdeen

According to FSD's record, the number of fire and special service calls in Aberdeen increased by 19.8% from 605 calls in 2006 to 725 calls in 2008. The number of emergency ambulance calls in Aberdeen and Apleichau also increased by 11.6% from 12 224 calls in 2006 to 13 641 calls in 2008.

The future major development projects in Aberdeen and Wong Chuk Hang are expected to attract more people to the areas and further increase the demand for both fire and ambulance services. These major development projects include the current expansion project of the Ocean Park, in which a funicular system with a maximum passenger capacity of up to 10 000 per hour has already

come into operation. A number of major ride systems as well as three new hotels are also expected to be completed in the coming few years. Moreover, two new stations are planned to be constructed in Wong Chuk Hang and Ocean Park under the Mass Transit Railway Corporation South Island Line project. A large maintenance depot will also be constructed next to the new Wong Chuk Hang Station. The above development projects would increase the demand for both fire and ambulance services in the area.

In view of the above, the FSD needs to step up the schedule of attendance in accordance with the increase in fire risk, such as increasing the number of manpower and fire appliances deployed in the fire station to cope with large scale incidents; and to deploy more ambulances to meet the increase in the demand for ambulance services in the area.

The impact of population change on demand for ambulance services

According to the population projection by the Government, there would not be major changes in the overall population of the Southern District in the coming years. The Census and Statistics Department projected that the total population of the Southern District in 2009 and 2016 would be around 275 600 and 272 100 persons respectively; nevertheless, the population of the Southern District with age exceeding 60 within the same period would drastically increase by 28% from the existing 50 600 persons to 64 900 persons. Generally speaking, elderly people may have greater demand for emergency ambulance services. Among the 11 000 patients conveyed by FSD in the Aberdeen and Apleichau areas from January to October 2009, around 7 500 patients were above 60 years old, which account for 68% of the total patients conveyed. Therefore, we expect that the demand for ambulance service in the area would increase due to aging population.

Overcrowding at the existing Aberdeen Fire Station

Commissioned in 1961, the existing Aberdeen Fire Station (Station) is a three-bay fire station designed to accommodate only three fire appliances, namely a Hydraulic Platform, a Major Pump and a Light Rescue Unit. With the development of multi-storey residential and commercial buildings in the area, the FSD has deployed an additional 37-metre Turntable Ladder, and a command car to the Station. Besides, as there is no dedicated ambulance depot in Aberdeen and Apleichau, FSD deployed four ambulances at the Station to meet the demand for

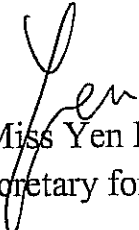
ambulance services in the area.

Temporary sheds are built inside the drill yard of the Station to accommodate the additional two fire appliances and four ambulances mentioned above. A vehicular access is also provided in the drill yard for the fire appliances and ambulances to gain access via the side entrance, which has further reduced the usable area of the drill yard and adversely affected the daily training of the Station. Moreover, as the side entrance is served as a normal vehicle entrance instead of a designated emergency vehicular exit, fire appliances and ambulances heading to scenes have to reduce their travelling speed to avoid collision with other vehicles driving into the Station. The turnout efficiency of the FSD vehicles when responding to emergency calls was affected indirectly.

The facilities of the existing Station also could not meet the needs of the officers deployed at the Station. The Station is originally designed for use by officers on three fire appliances, therefore cannot meet the needs of officers on the current nine fire appliances and ambulances in terms of both indoor space and facilities. The FSD vacated the officers' quarters in the Station to accommodate a temporary duty room and a common room for firemen and ambulancemen.

In view of the anticipated increase in demand for both fire and ambulance services in Aberdeen and Apleichau due to the above major development projects and aging population, and the overcrowding of the existing Station, the Administration considers that there is a need to re-provision the existing Station to a larger site, and construct an ambulance depot to improve the operation efficiency and meet the long term development needs of the area.

Yours sincerely,


(Miss Yen PUN)
for Secretary for Security

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