

Aircraft Noise Impacts on Residents

In its letter to the Hon. Christine LOH, Chairperson of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs, the Aircraft Noise Concern Committee inquired about the criteria adopted by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) in using Runways 25 and 07 at the new airport under different wind directions and strength. CAD's response is as follows-

In July, when Hong Kong was under the influence of the southwest monsoon, Runway 25 was used most of the time.

In general, the choice of runway depends on the prevailing wind direction and strength. Nevertheless, there are many other factors which need to be taken into consideration as well, including the prevailing traffic volume, the number of approaching aircraft which have been sequenced in the airspace, the effects of rain cloud and poor weather in the vicinity of the airport, the wind and weather conditions forecast in the coming hours and the operational performance of the aircraft. As regards changing the runway to another direction in the course of operation, we shall ensure, in the first place, that the shift would not pose potential risk to aircraft such as head-on situation. When traffic is heavy, the process involved will be more complicated and time consuming. Moreover, the changes in runway direction cannot be too frequent lest flight safety and runway capacity would be affected. As such, when a more frequent change of wind direction and strength is expected, air traffic controllers will be very cautious in deciding the runway direction. The choice of runway is certainly subject to other factors. For example, during the initial stage of new airport operation, the integration with ground activities was also a factor for consideration.

At the meeting of LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs on 18th August, the Government remarked that CAD would, as far as possible, arrange for aircraft arriving during the small hours from the southwest, subject to acceptable wind direction and strength as well as the pre-requisite that flight safety would not be compromised. This aims to reduce the number of aircraft overflying districts like Shatin, Kwai Chung, Tsuen Wan & Tsing Yi.