

**Information Note for
the Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services**

**Second Runway at the
Hong Kong International Airport**

Introduction

There have been press reports about the opening date of the second runway. This paper serves to inform Members of the present position of the project and make a number of clarifications.

Latest Progress of the Second Runway Project

2. The Airport Authority (AA) confirms that the Second Runway was originally programmed to be completed and commissioned around the end of this year. In the light of the experience gained during the operation of the First Runway in the past five months, the AA has decided to make a number of enhancements to the Second Runway Airfield Ground Lighting (AGL) system. These enhancements involve putting the control functions of the AGL on a separate, dedicated communications system. As this involves extension in the scope of works, the Second Runway is now expected to come into operation around mid 1999.

3. The enhancements to the ground lighting are required because there have been incidents when the First Runway AGL did not respond to communications from the Air Traffic Control Tower as quickly as it should. These were due to problems in the Fixed Communications System (FCS) that are being rectified. In the meantime, a back-up arrangement has been put in place. At no time was safety compromised or air traffic affected.

Implications on Air Traffic

4. There have also been reports about concerns that the airport would be unable to meet peak hour air traffic demand pending the commissioning of the Second Runway. The Authority does not expect the deferment in the opening of the Second Runway to around mid 1999 to adversely affect the air traffic at the airport. The First Runway continues to offer the airport sufficient capacity for the coming months.

5. According to the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), the First Runway of the new airport has a declared capacity of 37 movements per hour, which is much higher than a declared capacity of 31 movements per hour at Kai Tak Airport. As a result of this increase in runway capacity coupled with a drop in traffic of some 20% when compared with the original forecast due to the regional economic downturn, all demands including peak hour demands for the current winter schedule have been met. As regards the coming summer schedule which will start on 28 March 1999, the airlines are finalising their requirements. It is not expected that there will be a sharp increase in demand.

Conclusion

6. The advantage of having two runways is fully recognised by both CAD and the AA. Having examined the position very carefully, they both consider it prudent and sensible to make the enhancements to the Second Runway before it opens to ensure its smooth and efficient operation. All civil engineering works and the main components of the AGL are scheduled to be completed around the end of 1998. Pending the completion of the lighting enhancements, consideration could be given to making available the Second Runway for emergency use where circumstances permit if the First Runway has to be closed for one reason or another.

Airport Authority/Civil Aviation Department
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