

For information
on 28 February 2005

**Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services
and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works**

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

Purpose

This note sets out some relevant considerations in examining the feasibility and desirability of making the proposed helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) available to both Government and commercial operators.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Panel on Economic Services on 7 December 2004 and the joint meeting of the Panel on Economic Services and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 31 January 2005, Members discussed the scale and location of a heliport.

3. At the meeting on 31 January 2005, Members considered various draft motions. The possibility of sharing the proposed Government helipad at the HKCEC with commercial operators while obviating the need for reclamation was floated.

Considerations

4. From the security point of view, the Administration has no in-principle objection to considering sharing a multi-pad heliport with commercial operators. Our overriding principle is that the efficiency and effectiveness of Government emergency and essential flying services are not adversely affected. In LC Paper No. CB(1)769/04-05(04) submitted to the meeting on 31 January 2005, we have set out the Administration's concerns about the option of shared-use at the HKCEC at the planned scale, i.e., without reclamation. We remain of the view that the option is likely to give rise to practical problems.

5. The proposed Government helipad at HKCEC will have only one single take-off / landing pad (plus one emergency parking pad), with no other facilities. We note that its scale and facilities would be grossly inadequate compared with either the industry's proposal or the Government's projected demand for commercial helicopter services. As set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)376/04-05(04), the number of annual domestic commercial helicopter flights increased by 126% from 4,790 movements to 10,831 movements between 2001 and 2003, and the domestic helicopter services market is estimated to grow by an average of 6.3% per year up to 2020. We, therefore, question if any proposal to share the single-pad site at the HKCEC would enable the discussion to be taken forward on a long-term basis.

6. From the point of view of ensuring timely and effective Government emergency and essential flying services, the following considerations would be crucial in assessing the practicability of the option for shared-use of the single-pad at HKCEC -

- (a) Government emergency and essential flying operations must have priority at all times in using the helipad. This could well mean last-minute changes or prolonged disruption to the commercial operators' service.
- (b) Operational and safety procedures endorsed and enforced by a regulator should be put in place. The feasibility of tailoring these procedures satisfactorily to the physical layout of the HKCEC site and catering for contingencies (e.g., the failure of a commercial helicopter to clear from the site for whatever reason) needs to be established.
- (c) There should be on-site positive air traffic control by the regulator both to ensure air traffic safety and to coordinate the use of the helipad by the Government on the one hand and commercial operators on the other. This would be essential in view of the likely very high usage rate by multiple commercial operators awarded use of the site, presumably through a competitive process.

We think that the shared-use option would only be regarded as feasible if it is established that the above conditions can be met, and we can minimize the inherent risk on emergency and essential Government flying services, which directly impact on the public's safety, associated with the

shared-use of the small helipad.

7. This note focuses on the key considerations from the viewpoint of ensuring that emergency and essential Government flying service would not be compromised should there be shared use of the single-pad HKCEC site. It, therefore, does not reiterate other concerns, such as local objections from communities that might be affected.

Conclusion

8. Members are invited to take into account the issues set out in paragraphs 4 to 6, when considering the shared-use option of the proposed Government helipad at the HKCEC.

Security Bureau
February 2005