

For Information

Legislative Council Subcommittee to Follow Up Issues Relating to the Three-runway System at the Hong Kong International Airport

Issues Raised at the meeting on 16 February 2016

Introduction

In discussing LC Paper No. CB(4)576/15-16(01) at the meeting on 16 February 2016, the Airport Authority Hong Kong (“AAHK”) undertook to provide the following additional information as per Members’ request :

- (a) the number of warning letters issued to operators of SkyPier High Speed Ferries (“HSFs”) whose ferries travelled at speed of over 15 knots within Chinese White Dolphin (“CWD”) hotspots (i.e. Speed Control Zone “SCZ”) since the rerouting of SkyPier HSFs operating to/from Zhuhai and Macau on 28 December 2015;
 - (b) information on the extent of speeding by SkyPier HSFs within CWD hotspots; and
 - (c) the average daily number of arrivals at and departures from SkyPier each year in the past 10 years.
- (a) & (b) The number of notices issued and the extent of speeding of SkyPier HSFs travelling across the Speed Control Zone

2. In accordance with the relevant provision in the Marine Travel Routes and Management Plan for HSFs of SkyPier (“SkyPier Plan”) under the relevant Environmental Permit (“EP”), any non-compliance with the requirements and arrangements for speed control shall result in warnings to operators. That said, the SkyPier Plan also provides that vessel captains may decide to deviate from the requirements in response to an emergency or in the interest of public safety, e.g. in case of adverse sea conditions. On this basis, when speeding was observed, AAHK would issue notices to the ferry operators asking for an

explanation. If the operator is unable to provide a valid explanation, AAHK will consider issuing a warning.

3. A summary of the number of notices issued and the corresponding extent of speeding of SkyPier HSFs travelling across the SCZ between 28 December 2015 and 29 February 2016 are shown below:

| Period | Number of notices issued by AAHK to ferry operators related to potential speeding across the SCZ | Corresponding extent of speeding by SkyPier HSFs across the SCZ (knots) |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| 28 – 31 Dec 2015 (4 days) | 40 | < 5 (20 cases) 6 – 15 (13 cases) > 15 (7 cases) |
| 1 – 31 Jan 2016 (31 days) | 83 | < 5 (63 cases) 6 – 15 (10 cases) >15 (10 cases) |
| 1 – 29 Feb 2016 (29 days) | 51 | < 5 (46 cases) 6 – 15 (4 cases) >15 (1 case) |

4. During the initial implementation period, the SkyPier HSFs encountered occasional difficulties in strictly observing the 15-knot speed limit throughout the journey. In accordance with the SkyPier Plan, further training workshops for the SkyPier operators were held in January 2016 to ensure their full understanding of and adherence to the routing and speed control requirements.

5. The situation considerably improved in February 2016, and the implementation and monitoring requirements stipulated in the SkyPier Plan were fully complied with. In response to AAHK’s enquiry on the reason(s) for speeding, the concerned ferry operators advised that most of the cases were related to local strong water current, including those associated with head-on large vessels such as container and ocean-going vessels, as well as anchored vessels. In those cases, the HSF captains considered that speeding up or overtaking for a short duration was necessary for public safety¹.

¹ According to S.26 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499), a person does not commit an offence of contravening a EP condition if he carries out an action in response to an emergency and in the interests of public safety or public health. Similar provision is also stipulated in the SkyPier Plan.

6. As Members were advised at the meeting of this Subcommittee on 16 February 2016, AAHK is firmly committed to implementing all the requirements, including the 15-knot restriction, as stipulated in the SkyPier Plan which is part of the 3RS EP conditions. AAHK has been liaising with the relevant operators and authorities on the implementation details to ensure their compliance with the requirements.

(c) The average daily number of arrivals at and departures from SkyPier each year in the past 10 years

7. As stipulated in the EP and set out in paragraph 14 of LC Paper No. CB(4)576/15-16(01), in addition to route diversion and speed restrictions in high-density CWD areas, AAHK is committed to capping the SkyPier HSF traffic movements at an annual daily average of 99 prior to the successful designation of the proposed marine park.

8. Scheduled and actual HSF movements at SkyPier since 2010 have been critically reviewed in order to establish the above maximum daily capping commitment. Information relating to the average daily number of arrivals at and departures from SkyPier in the past 10 years is shown below.

| Year | Daily average number of SkyPier HSFs | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|
| | Arrivals | Departures | Total |
| 2006 | 33 | 30 | 63 |
| 2007 | 38 | 36 | 74 |
| 2008 | 38 | 36 | 74 |
| 2009 | 38 | 36 | 74 |
| 2010 | 50 | 49 | 99 |
| 2011 | 51 | 46 | 97 |
| 2012 | 45 | 39 | 84 |
| 2013 | 44 | 39 | 83 |
| 2014 | 44 | 39 | 83 |
| 2015 | 50 | 44 | 94 |

Advice Sought

9. Members are invited to note the additional information set out in this paper.

**Airport Authority Hong Kong
March 2016**