For information

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services

Subcommittee to follow up the recommendations
of the three inquiry reports on the opening of the new airport

Airport Authority - Access Control System

INTRODUCTION

At the joint panel meeting held on 14 April 1999, Members requested an update on the Access Control System (ACS), and in particular, the additional expenses incurred by the Authority in providing extra guards for security purposes, and whether the Authority has lodged any claims against the contractor in question. This paper provides the required information.

BACKGROUND

2. In order to ensure aircraft, passengers, crews and the general public are safeguarded against any act of unlawful interference, the Authority is required by law to control access to the restricted area in the airport to those properly authorised persons. This is achieved through the administration of an airport permit system and the operation of access controls at the entry points to the restricted area.

3. Following the acceptance by the Authority of the Detail Design Specification and the Functional Design Specification submitted by the contractor Guardforce and its subcontractor CEM, approval for the implementation was given at the end of 1996.

The System

4. The access control functions required under each of the two operational areas are as follows -

(a) Aviation Security

- Production of Airport Restricted Area Permit (ARAP)
- Security of doors into the airport restricted areas.
- Segregation of departing and arriving passengers
- Verification of ARAPs at restricted area access points

- Monitoring of alarms at the control centre
- Record-keeping of access activities

(b) General Building Security

- Integration with the Passenger Terminal Building (PTB) Fire Alarm system and control of fire exit doors
- Control of access to communication rooms and plant rooms Control of access to stairwells and office areas
- Distress alarms in the toilets for the disabled
- Integration with other airport management systems such as Closed Circuit Television and Building Systems Integration

Airport Opening Day Problems

5.   During the construction phase of the airport, slippage was encountered in the installation programme of the ACS. Due to this delay, the full functionalities of the system were not available on airport opening day (AOD). Problems with security of access occurred, requiring the stationing of guards. As aviation security is of paramount importance to the airport, the Authority considers such measures as necessary and justified.

6.   One of the problems was with the doors opening into the restricted areas of the PTB. These doors have to be secured. However due to the excessive number of nuisance alarms generated from other faults and misuse of the system by airport staff, it was not possible to monitor effectively the status of the doors from the control centre. To provide a local monitoring function static guards were deployed at these doors.

7.   The other problem was with the doors leading to the fixed link bridges at the departure and arrival levels. These doors are interlockable so that arriving and departing passengers are separated. On AOD, some of the airline staff could not open these doors with their permits despite the fact that they were authorised to do so. To overcome this problem, all the doors for the fixed link bridges were deactivated and static guards were deployed to ensure arriving and departing passengers were segregated.

LATEST POSITION

8.   Since AOD, these defects on aviation security doors have been gradually fixed by the contractor and refresher courses on the operation of the system have been carried out. All doors can now be monitored at the control

centre and staff with authorised permits can operate the doors at the fixed link bridges. Static guards were withdrawn in phases as the defects were rectified. The last of the static guards was withdrawn on 12 April 1999. Cost paid to the external security companies to perform static guard duty between 6 July 1998 and 12 April 1999 is HK$44.5 million.

9.   A further release of the ACS software, which incorporates various fixes developed over the past few months and which facilitates future maintenance by the Authority's own staff, is currently undergoing testing. This release will be installed in the second week of May and it is anticipated that further confidence trials of the various aviation security components will be carried out by the end of May. After that, site acceptance tests of the general building security devices will be carried out.

Cost Recovery from the Contractor

10.   The Authority is currently reviewing all matters of a contractual nature with the contractor. The issue of additional costs incurred will be one of the items for review.

Airport Authority
6 May 1999