

LCQ4: VIP lounge services at Hong Kong International Airport

Following is a question by the Hon Gary Zhang and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 14):

Question:

It has been reported that the passenger throughput at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) reached 5.28 million in January this year, with an average daily passenger throughput of over 170 000. However, there are views pointing out that the existing VIP lounge services set up by airlines or enterprises at HKIA are unable to meet the demand, resulting in chronic queues. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it knows:

- (1) the current number of VIP lounges at HKIA, as well as the respective average daily number of passengers served and maximum capacity, floor area and year of opening; whether the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) will consider allowing enterprises to re-establish VIP lounges on the Arrivals Level in response to the increased passenger throughput due to the expansion of HKIA; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) the number of additional VIP lounges planned to be provided in HKIA's Terminal 1 in the next five years, together with their respective area, target average daily number of passengers to be served and maximum capacity; the eligibility criteria, approval standards, procedures and time required for applications to establish or expand VIP lounges; and
- (3) the number of VIP lounges planned to be established after the expansion of HKIA's Terminal 2; the respective location, area, target average daily number of passengers to be served and maximum capacity of these VIP lounges and their opening dates?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is an international aviation hub. This positioning is recognised in the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. To this end, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) have been taking measures to continuously enhance the strengths and competitiveness of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA).

With regard to passenger services, the efficiency of airport operations and the passenger experience are our keys to success. Taking into account the large number of passengers, who are of different backgrounds and with different travel purposes, received by the airport every day, the AAHK has

been providing a wide range of facilities and services at HKIA, and has been continuously reviewing and striving to improve the facilities to cater for the needs of different groups of passengers. In particular, to cater for the needs of high-end and business travellers, the AAHK has reserved locations in the Passenger Terminal Building of HKIA for airlines or other corporations to set up and operate lounges in accordance with the market demand and commercial modes, with a view to providing travellers with a more superior and comfortable travel experience.

With regard to the matters relating to the lounges in the question, having consulted the AAHK, my reply is as follows:

(1) At present, there are 17 lounges at HKIA, including nine lounges operated by airlines for use by designated passengers of the airlines and their alliances, and eight other lounges operated by other non-airline corporations, which are open to passengers on a pay-per-visit basis or on other prescribed modes.

These lounges, which first started operation in 1998, range in size from less than 200 square metres to over 6 000 square metres. The location, size and establishment year of each lounge are set out at the Annex. As regards the service capacity, the 17 lounges mentioned above can receive a total of about 22 000 visitors per day on average, and are currently receiving about 16 000 visitors per day. As the numbers of visitors received by each individual lounge involve commercially sensitive information of the operators, the AAHK is not positioned to provide such information.

Taking into account the fact that departing or transfer passengers generally stay in the restricted area of the airport for a longer period of time to wait for boarding and departure, and that most arriving passengers leave the airport for the urban area expeditiously upon their arrival in Hong Kong, the AAHK has mainly reserved spaces for lounges on the Departures Level of the restricted area to cater for the needs of passengers waiting for their flights. At present, all the 17 lounges at HKIA are located on the Departures Level of the restricted area of Terminal 1 for use by departing or transit passengers. That said, in view of the demand of some arriving passengers for lounge services, there were previously two lounges in the original Terminal 2. The AAHK has reserved spaces for re-establishing two lounges in the Arrivals Hall of the expanded Terminal 2. The proposed lounges will be located outside the restricted area and adjacent to Terminal 1, which will facilitate the reception of passengers arriving via either terminals.

(2) and (3) With the increasing number of high-end passengers, the AAHK has been maintaining communication with airlines and other related corporations, and negotiating with airlines and other corporations interested in setting up, expanding and refurbishing lounges on the leasing arrangements as well as the related operational details, so as to ensure that the facilities of the airport lounges can meet the demand of passengers.

With regard to Terminal 1, the AAHK has already received and approved expansion plans for two lounges currently operated by airlines, with their areas be increased by about 4 200 square metres. One of the lounges will be

refurbished and expanded within this year and will reopen in 2027, while the other will commence expansion works in 2028 and reopen in 2030. Meanwhile, the AAHK has reserved another three locations on the Departures Level for the operation of new lounges and is in discussion with a number of airlines with a view to bringing the lounges into operation progressively from this year onwards. The total area of the three lounges is about 2 300 square metres.

For the expanded Terminal 2 and the Terminal 2 Concourse (T2C), the AAHK is now working with its business partners on the preparatory work and will commission the facilities in phases in accordance with passenger demand. Of them, the abovementioned two lounges at the Arrivals Hall, with a total area of about 1 000 square metres, are expected to come into service in phases to tie in with the phased opening of Terminal 2 from end of this year. The AAHK has also reserved spaces on the Departures Level for seven lounges, with a total area of about 6 000 square metres, which will come into operation gradually to tie in with the opening of T2C.

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President, overall speaking, apart from continuously improving and upgrading airport facilities (e.g. lounges), we have also adopted a multi-pronged approach to enhance the passenger experience at the airport, which includes adopting a number of measures such as increasing efficiency through the use of innovative technology, enhancing the customer service standard of airport staff, and increasing the variety of shopping and dining options at the airport, with a view to providing passengers with more comfortable and convenient services.