

“Aberdeen – Cheung Chau” ferry service to cease operation on January 1

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 30) announced that the ferry service between Aberdeen and Cheung Chau will cease operation from January 1, 2020.

A spokesman for the TD explained, "The Government understands that outlying island ferry services provide indispensable external links for residents, yet the business environment has been very difficult. Hence, the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address proposes to provide 14 outlying island ferry routes (including the "Aberdeen – Cheung Chau" ferry route) (Note 1) with Special Helping Measures in order to enhance the financial viability of the ferry services, and to launch a new Vessel Subsidy Scheme to replace the fleets of 11 ferry routes (including the "Aberdeen – Cheung Chau" ferry route) (Note 2) and introduce greener vessels."

The spokesman said, "After receiving the operator Maris Ferry Service Limited's notification of terminating the ferry service because of an operating deficit, the TD invited interested parties for Expression of Interest (EOI) in operating the "Aberdeen – Cheung Chau" ferry service twice in October and December this year respectively in order to continue operating the ferry service. As the TD did not receive any EOI submission in the first invitation for EOI, the TD relaxed the requirements for the frequency and the carrying capacity of the vessel as well as shortened the operating hours in the invitation document of the second invitation for EOI. The relaxation was aimed at reducing the operating costs to attract interested parties to operate the ferry service. By the close of the second invitation for EOI on December 23, the TD did not receive any EOI submission. However, any ferry operator interested in operating the ferry service in the future is welcome to submit an application to the TD. The TD will consider the application in accordance with the established procedures (including invitations to interested parties for EOI).

After cessation of the ferry service, the affected passengers may take the "Central – Cheung Chau" outlying island ferry service. The TD has been monitoring passenger demand and observed that the carrying capacity currently provided by the "Central – Cheung Chau" ferry route can meet passenger demand.

The ferry operator has already put up notices at ferry piers and on board ferries to inform passengers of the service termination. The TD will closely monitor passenger demand after the service termination and will discuss with the ferry operator of the "Central – Cheung Chau" outlying island ferry route about enhancing the level of service, if necessary.

Note 1: These 14 routes are "Central – Cheung Chau", "Inter-islands" (plying between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau), "Central – Mui Wo", "Central – Peng Chau", "Central – Yung Shue Wan", "Central – Sok Kwu Wan",

"Aberdeen – Cheung Chau", "Aberdeen – Yung Shue Wan via Pak Kok Tsuen", "Aberdeen – Sok Kwu Wan via Mo Tat", "Tuen Mun – Tung Chung – Sha Lo Wan – Tai O", "Discovery Bay – Mui Wo", "Ma Wan – Central", "Ma Wan – Tsuen Wan" and "Central – Discovery Bay".

Note 2: These 11 routes are "Central – Cheung Chau", "Inter-islands" (plying between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau), "Central – Mui Wo", "Central – Peng Chau", "Central – Yung Shue Wan", "Central – Sok Kwu Wan", "Aberdeen – Cheung Chau", "Aberdeen – Yung Shue Wan via Pak Kok Tsuen", "Aberdeen – Sok Kwu Wan via Mo Tat", "Tuen Mun – Tung Chung – Sha Lo Wan – Tai O" and "Discovery Bay – Mui Wo".