

LCQ22: Enhancing the efficiency of travellers' immigration clearance at Luohu

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

It has been reported that the Shenzhen Municipal Government has recently stated that it is planning to redevelop the Luohu Port and hopes to collaborate with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to bring the MTR East Rail Line (ERL) into Luohu and implement "co-location arrangement" at the Luohu Port. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the average time taken for travellers to cross the Luohu Port in each of the past three years;

(2) given that in reply to my question on April 10 this year, the Government pointed out that in planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the Government would actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in new land BCP projects, whether the Government will discuss with the relevant Mainland authorities the implementation of the said mode at the redeveloped Luohu Port to enhance the efficiency of travellers' immigration clearance;

(3) whether it has projected the amount of time savings for travellers crossing the Luohu Port after completion of its redevelopment; and

(4) as it has been reported that the Luohu District's Three-year Action Plan for the Development of a Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integrated Development Demonstration Zone for Attracting Global Resources has unequivocally stated that Shenzhen and Hong Kong will join hands to develop a co-operative demonstration park in Lot B1 of the transit land adjacent to the Luohu Port, whether the Government has estimated the benefits to be brought to the lot's development by bringing ERL into Luohu?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau, my reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam is as follows:

(1) Except for the service suspension period during the COVID-19 pandemic, in each of the past three years (2021, 2022 and 2023), the Lo Wu Control Point was able to complete immigration clearance for Hong Kong residents and visitors within 15 minutes and 30 minutes respectively.

(2) to (4) Having a long history, the Lo Wu Port has connected Hong Kong and Shenzhen since the 1900s. It has always been one of the busiest land boundary control points (BCPs) with the highest number of inbound and outbound passengers. In 2023, the daily average of passengers trips nearly reached 138 000. The passenger terminal buildings of Hong Kong and Shenzhen at the port are built within their respective boundary along the Shenzhen River and are connected by a pedestrian bridge. This allows passengers from the two places to complete departure clearance at one side and then walk to the passenger terminal building of the other side via the pedestrian bridge in order to conduct arrival clearance. The port has been very popular among passengers since it is connected to the central part of Shenzhen and is well-connected by public transport, being served by railways of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government understands from the Shenzhen side that their relevant authorities will soon carry out modification works for the Luohu Port on the Shenzhen side. The modification works aim to "eliminate safety hazards, improve the port's functions, and upgrade the inspection facilities", with a view to further enhancing the port's clearance capability as well as its image as a gateway to the city, and facilitating travellers' clearance. The scope of works is limited to the Shenzhen side only and does not include the extension of MTR East Rail Line (ERL) into Luohu district of Shenzhen side.

As the modification works of the Shenzhen side will not involve the operation of the Lo Wu Control Point of the Hong Kong side, it is envisaged that upon the completion of works, the time required for immigration clearance at the Lo Wu Control Point of the Hong Kong side will not be affected.

In planning for the redevelopment of existing BCPs and the development of new BCPs in the future, the HKSAR Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in new land BCPs projects. Issues involved in changing the clearance mode of existing BCPs are far more complicated than implementing new clearance mode at new BCPs, and the related works must be carried out on the premise that the BCPs' existing operations will not be affected. It is therefore necessary for the HKSAR Government and relevant Mainland authorities to make careful planning to ensure that the port design, boundary arrangements, facilities layout, passenger flow, and other ancillary facilities can accommodate the operation of the new clearance mode before its implementation could be considered.

Although Shenzhen is about to carry out modification works for the Luohu Port, the works will not bring about changes in the overall facilities layout and passenger clearance route (i.e. Hong Kong and Shenzhen to have their own

passenger terminal buildings within their respective boundary along the Shenzhen River and the two buildings to be connected by a pedestrian bridge). Therefore, after the modification of the Port in Shenzhen, the current clearance mode will continue, instead of adopting the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode. Besides, the HKSAR Government noted that the Shenzhen side has no plan to extend the MTR ERL into the Luohu district of Shenzhen.