

LCQ15: Provision of storage areas for dragon boats

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 18):

Question:

A number of fishermen associations and dragon boat clubs have relayed to me that the storage space for dragon boats currently provided by the Government is insufficient, and some dragon boats have been damaged due to prolonged exposure to the sun and rain and long-distance transportation, seriously affecting the holding of dragon boat activities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows, in each of the past five years around the territories, (i) the number of dragon boats and (ii) the number of storage spaces available for dragon boats, with a tabulated breakdown by District Council district;
- (2) whether it will review and improve the existing arrangements for assisting community groups in storing dragon boats, with a view to providing more suitable space for them to store dragon boats; if so, of the details (including the required land resources, staffing establishment and expenditure); if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) whether the Government currently provides any channels for members of the public to apply for space for storing dragon boats; if so, of the application procedure, and the assistance to be provided by the Government; and
- (4) as it is learnt that the shortage of storage space for dragon boats has resulted in some dragon boat clubs having to apply to the Home Affairs Department for renting venues for storing dragon boats, whether the Government will consider leasing the venues concerned to the relevant organisations at a low rent or even at no rent at all to help them reduce operating expenses, thereby encouraging the transmission of the traditional cultural activity of dragon boat racing?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Home Affairs Department (HAD), my reply to the questions raised by the Hon Steven Ho is as follows:

- (1) According to the records of the HAD, dragon boat races were held in nine districts in the past five years, including Islands, Southern, Eastern, Kwai Tsing, Sai Kung, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun Districts. The nine District Offices (DOs) as mentioned understand that most of the organisations

conducting the races generally stored their dragon boats at sites leased from respective District Lands Offices under short-term tenancies (STT) whereas the rest stored at private places. As for the number of dragon boats and the number of storage spaces available for dragon boats across the territory, both HAD and various DOs do not have the relevant information.

(2) – (4) In order to better utilise land resources, applications for STT at nominal rent can be submitted to the Lands Department by non-governmental organisations for community, institutional or non-profit making uses when there are temporary vacant sites available. The list of temporary vacant sites currently available for community, institutional or non-profit making uses can be found on the Government's GeoInfo Map webpage (www.map.gov.hk/gm/map/search/faci/___VGS?lg=en).

Applications for STT concerned should have the policy support of the relevant policy bureau. In handling applications for STT, the Home Affairs Bureau will consider rendering policy support from the sports development angle. The following criteria should be met:

1. the applicant should be an non-profit making organisation;
2. the applicant should be a national sports association (NSA) or has the written support on the application from the NSA of the concerned sport;
3. the proposed use should be for sports purposes; and
4. the development, financial and operational plans should be submitted to demonstrate the feasibility of the application and the worthiness in promoting the development of the sport concerned.

At present, some non-profit making dragon boating organisations have rented vacant government sites by way of STT at nominal rent in different districts (including Eastern, Sha Tin and Sai Kung Districts) for setting up dragon boat training centres or storing dragon boats. Should applications from organisations or members of the public are received for renting temporary vacant sites for setting up dragon boat training centres or storing dragon boats, they will be processed and vetted by the departments concerned in accordance with the established procedures.