

LCQ18: Recreation and sports facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, in the Legislative Council today (September 1):

Question:

The Hong Kong delegation achieved the best results in history in the Tokyo Summer Olympic Games, rousing a craze for sports throughout the territory. However, some members of the public have pointed out that the recreation and sports (R&S) facilities in Hong Kong have long been insufficient. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government has indicated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) that it "encourages participation in recreational pursuits and seeks to ensure that appropriate opportunities are available to meet the needs of the people of Hong Kong", of a breakdown, by District Council district and type of R&S facilities, of (i) the numbers of such facilities provided by the Government at present, and (ii) the discrepancies (if any) between the numbers mentioned in (i) and those that should be provided according to the standards stipulated in the HKPSG; whether it has plans to provide more R&S facilities in those districts where such facilities fall short of the standards; if so, of the details; whether it has plans to raise the relevant standards which have been put in place for years, so as to meet the present-day demands of the community; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that the Government put forth in the 2017 Policy Address the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities to launch 26 projects before 2022 so as to provide more and improve R&S facilities in the districts, of the latest progress of the various projects; whether it will consider expediting the implementation of the projects, with a view to advancing their completion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will study the redevelopment of the existing old sports centres and R&S centres into modern and multi-functional R&S buildings, so as to achieve the goal of optimising land uses; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) of the number of schools participating in the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme, the percentage of that number in the total number of schools, and the number of occasions on which sports organisations hired the facilities, in the 2020-2021 school year; whether it has gained an understanding of the reasons for some schools not participating in the Scheme; of the new measures in place to encourage more schools and sports organisations to participate in the Scheme?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Starry Lee is as follows:

(1) Currently, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides various recreation and sports facilities. The provision of major fee-charging recreation and sports facilities under the LCSD against the provision as recommended by the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) is at Annex I.

Apart from the recreation and sports facilities provided by the LCSD, other organisations including schools, private sports clubs, public housing estates and private residential estates also provide different recreation and sports facilities. To ensure that the planning of recreation and sports facilities can meet public needs, the Sports Commission established a working group to review the overall supply of recreation and sports facilities and the demand for various types of sports facilities in Hong Kong. On the advice of the working group, the Government engaged a consultant in 2017 to conduct a Consultancy Study on the Provision of Sports Facilities in Hong Kong. With the rise in design standards and public expectations of the recreation and sports facilities, as well as taking into account population increase, enhancement of transport network and the need to balance competing land uses under limited land resources, we see the merits to consider revising the provision of recreation and sports facilities in the HKPSG to keep abreast with the latest development. The Consultancy Study is largely completed. We will later report to the Home Affairs Panel of the Legislative Council as well as the Sports Commission and follow up on the study recommendations.

(2) In the Policy Address in January 2017, the Government announced the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities (the Five-Year Plan) to launch 26 projects, involving an amount of about \$20 billion, to develop new and improve existing recreation and sports facilities with a view to meeting the demand of the public and promoting greater sports participation in the community. Among the 26 projects, 20 of them have obtained funding approval from the Legislative Council, involving an amount of about \$7.7 billion in total. Facilities in seven of these approved projects (Note) have been opened or scheduled for opening this year for public use while the pre-construction activities/construction works for another nine projects have commenced. Construction works for the remaining approved projects will commence within this year. The progress of these projects is at Annex II.

The Government will continue to implement the other projects under the Five-Year Plan. Upon completion of preparation work for individual projects, we will proceed with their implementation in accordance with the established mechanism and seek funding approval from the Legislative Council at the appropriate juncture.

(3) To address the public demand and aspiration for recreation and sports facilities, the LCSD reviews and enhances its existing facilities, including sports centres, from time to time. When launching construction, redevelopment

or renovation projects of its sports centres, the LCSD will review the usage of venues and make reference to the relevant planning standards. Views of the sports sector, members of the local community and users will be taken into account, and opportunities will be explored to introduce more modernised and innovative sports facilities. Following the Government's principle of "single site, multiple use", the LCSD will consider incorporating other recreational and sports and community use in tandem with enhancing existing provisions in the course of constructing and redeveloping its sports centres with a view to meeting public needs.

(4) The Education Bureau (EDB) and the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) launched the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (Scheme) in the 2017/18 school year to encourage schools to open up their facilities for sports organisations to hold sports programmes, with a view to enhancing the sporting culture in schools. The Scheme has been well received by the sports sector and schools since its launch.

In the 2020/21 school year, 126 schools, accounting for around 14 per cent of the public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme, participated in the Scheme. Among the participating schools, 45 schools paired up with 33 sports organisations to hold 168 sports programmes under the Scheme. Schools would choose whether to participate in the Scheme according to their circumstances and needs. Factors of their consideration include the appropriate facilities to be opened up to outside organisation(s) and the respective opening hours, security measures and manpower arrangements, as well as views of the stakeholders.

To encourage active participation from schools and sports organisations, the EDB and the HAB have been collecting feedback from the participating schools and sports organisations of the Scheme at the end of every school year to facilitate the review of the Scheme and implementation of corresponding enhancement measures whenever necessary.

Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we allow participating schools of the Scheme to apply for grant under the Capital Works Project category of the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation (Main Fund) for the building of new sports facilities. We also give schools more flexibility in the use of subsidies to replace or acquire equipment / appliances needed, in addition to the permitted items like hiring extra manpower, strengthening security measures, defraying additional utility costs, and carrying out urgent minor repair works in relation to the approved programmes.

Note: Waterfront Promenade adjacent to the Hong Kong Children's Hospital was opened for public use in February 2021. Open Space in Area 47 and 48, North District (i.e. Yat Ming Road Park in North District) and Open Space in Area 6, Tai Po (i.e. Ma Wo Road Garden) were opened in June 2021. In addition, Improvement of Hoi Bun Road Park and Adjacent Area, District Open Space Adjoining San Po Kong Public Housing Development, Avenue Park at Kai Tak, and Station Square at Kai Tak (Phase 1) are completed or will be completed soon, and will be opened for use gradually within this year.