

LCQ22: Public swimming pools

Following is a question by the Hon Doreen Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (October 23):

Question:

Regarding public swimming pools under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the utilisation rates (set out by session for admission) and attendances of various public swimming pools in each of the past five years;
- (2) of the number of schools holding swimming galas at public swimming pools in the past five years;
- (3) of the expenditure on the staff salaries and benefits, operating costs and maintenance fees of public swimming pools in the past five years;
- (4) in respect of the public swimming pools with utilisation rates on the low side, whether the authorities will consider consolidating them with those public swimming pools in the neighbouring districts to increase the overall utilisation rates, thereby better meeting the demand of members of the public;
- (5) as there are views pointing out that the mode of leisure and entertainment of members of the public is constantly changing, whether the authorities have plans to upgrade facilities of public swimming pools and include more diversified entertainment elements (such as water parks and water play facilities), so as to attract members of the public of different age groups to use them; and
- (6) as some persons with disabilities (PWDs) have relayed that barrier-free facilities at some public swimming pools are inadequate, of the current situation of the provision of barrier-free facilities at public swimming pools; whether it will consider further increasing and upgrading the barrier-free facilities at public swimming pools by, for example, providing additional ramps, lanes for exclusive use by PWDs and so on, at the swimming pools to improve the inclusiveness of public swimming pools, thereby benefiting a wider group of members of the public?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Doreen Kong is as follows:

- (1) As the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) does not maintain record of individual swimmer's time of entry and exit at its public swimming pools, there is no information about the utilisation rate of its swimming

pools at different periods of time. Details of the attendance of public swimming pools managed by the LCSD are set out at Annex I.

(2) In the past five years, the number of schools that have hosted swimming galas in public swimming pools managed by the LCSD is as follows:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number	234	31	30	101	231

* In view of the situation of COVID-19, public swimming pools were closed during various periods from 2020 to 2022. Hence, the number of swimming galas held was lower.

(3) In the past five years, the expenditure on staff remuneration and fringe benefits as well as the operating cost of public swimming pools are as follows:

Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	(\$ million)				
Expenditure on staff remuneration and fringe benefits	660.06	660.06	660.06	686.17	720.30
Operating cost	520.34	513.36	532.91	563.55	596.61

As for repair and maintenance, multiple works departments are responsible for the maintenance and repair of various recreation and sports facilities under the LCSD. Costs of works such as repair, maintenance, improvement and refurbishment of facilities, as well as expenses on equipment procurement, are included in the overall expenditure of those works departments. The LCSD does not have a breakdown of the repair and maintenance costs of public swimming pools.

(4) and (5) In order to cater for the public demand for different swimming pool facilities, the number and type of facilities as well as design and layout of public swimming pools vary. At present, 25 of the public swimming pools under the LCSD (such as Kennedy Town Swimming Pool, Hammer Hill Road Swimming Pool and Tseung Kwan O Swimming Pool etc) offer water play equipment in addition to conventional swimming facilities, addressing the needs of different age groups and allowing more citizens to experience the fun of aquatic activities.

The selection of location, types of facilities offered as well as design and layout of each swimming pool must meet the needs of the public (especially the local residents) for swimming facilities. The LCSD will optimise the use of resources according to the actual situation, closely monitor the utilisation of public swimming pools and take into account different factors, including the impact on local residents, future demographic changes and the views of relevant district councils, when reviewing the future planning of its facilities.

(6) At present, among the 46 public swimming pools under the LCSD, 36 (about 78 per cent) are equipped with accessible lifting platforms or ramps to assist persons with disabilities in entering the pools. A list of these swimming pools is at Annex II. As for the remaining public swimming pools where accessible lifting platforms or ramps have yet to be installed, there are other pools equipped with relevant facilities within the same district. Persons with disabilities may consider visiting another pool in the same district for the swimming facilities thereat according to their needs.

All leisure venues of the LCSD built after 2008 (including public swimming pools) are in compliance with the requirements of the "Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008", including the provision of ramps or accessible lifting platforms as far as possible to assist persons with disabilities in entering the pools. As for the leisure venues built before 2008 (including public swimming pools), subject to geographical environment, allocation of resources, architectural conditions and technical feasibility, the LCSD will arrange for relevant improvement works to be carried out, such as providing facilities for barrier-free access, accessible toilets and parking spaces, as well as adding facilities such as tactile guide paths, Braille signage, Braille and tactile maps, for the convenience of the visually impaired, in the course of renovation or conversion so that persons with disabilities can also enjoy swimming pool facilities provided by the LCSD.