

LCQ9: Public bathing beaches under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Yiu Pak-leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

There are views that beaches can serve as tourist attractions, and by offering diversified water sports activities and catering facilities at beaches, as well as using them as venues for performances and sports events, Hong Kong can cultivate a more vibrant beach culture and realise the concept of "tourism is everywhere". However, the 42 public bathing beaches currently managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) can only meet the most basic recreational needs with their limited facilities, and it is difficult for organisations to apply to use them as venues for activities and mega events. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information about the public bathing beaches under the management of LCSD: (i) the number of users so far this year, (ii) the area, (iii) the area used for commercial purposes, and (iv) the specific commercial uses (set out in the table below);

| Public bathing beach | (i) | | (iv) |
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(2) whether LCSD has organised activities at the public bathing beaches under its management other than opening them to the public for bathing since last year; if so, of the details (including the content of the activities and the number of participants) (set out in a table); if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as it is learnt that eligible organisations may apply to LCSD for organising non-designated use activities at public bathing beaches, of the number of the relevant applications made since last year and, among such applications, the details of the activities involved in the approved applications (including the content of the activities and the number of participants) (set out in a table); the criteria adopted by LCSD for vetting and approving such applications, for example, whether the attractiveness of these activities to tourists is one of the considerations in vetting and approving the applications;

(4) whether LCSD will review the existing management mechanism of public bathing beaches to facilitate different organisations to apply for the use of beaches to organise activities, thereby encouraging more activities and mega events to be held at public bathing beaches; and

(5) whether LCSD will review the existing ancillary facilities at beaches to create a unique beach culture from a tourism perspective, such as providing additional catering facilities or more diversified water experience activities, thereby creating more consumption scenarios to attract members of the public and tourists to visit the beaches?

Reply:

President,

The 42 public beaches under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) are equipped with swimming-related ancillary facilities. Some of which also provide barbecue pits, beach volleyball courts and obstacle golf courses, offering a variety of activity spaces for enjoyment for members of the public and tourists.

Regarding the questions raised by the Hon Yiu Pak-leung, my reply is as follows:

(1) From January 1 to November 30, 2024, the number of users, the surface area of the beach, the surface area for commercial purposes as well as information on the specific commercial purposes served of the 42 public beaches under the LCSD are set out at Annex I.

(2) Information on the activities organised at public beaches by the LCSD from January 1, 2023 to November 30, 2024 is set out at Annex II.

(3)&(4) The LCSD has all along approved applications from different organisations for holding various activities at the beaches. For example, the Tuen Mun Beach Festival held at Golden Beach and Cafeteria New Beach, the Tai Po Lung Mei Beach Festival held at Tai Po Lung Mei Beach, and the special events held at Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach during specific festive occasions such as Christmas, Easter and the Mid-Autumn Festival, including festive celebrations, family-friendly activities and carnivals etc. These activities were widely popular among participants, enhancing the appeal of public beaches and fostering community cohesion.

When processing such applications, the LCSD will take into account various factors, including the area to be hired, the duration of hire, the purpose and nature of the activity, the appeal to the public, and the possible impact on other venue users etc. Relevant government departments will also be consulted.

From January 1, 2023 to November 30, 2024, the LCSD has approved a total of 55 booking applications from different organisations for non-designated use of public beaches. Details of the programmes and the attendances are set out at Annex III.

(5) Apart from providing safe and quality recreational and sports facilities for the public, the LCSD also enhances the facilities of its beaches

proactively with a view to attracting more members of the public and tourists to the public beaches as well as supporting the promotion of "tourism is everywhere" through making good use of the magnificent coastline and water bodies of Hong Kong.

At present, different catering businesses, restaurants and ancillary facilities offering a diversified range of food, beverages and products have been provided in the vicinity of multiple beaches of the LCSD to cater for the needs of the public and boost local economy. Beach umbrella and deck chair hire services are also available at the light refreshment kiosks of some beaches to provide convenience to swimmers and visitors. To further improve the services at the beaches and enhance their attractiveness, "check-in" spots will be set up at suitable beaches for photo-taking by swimmers and visitors during their visits.

The LCSD will continue to strive to optimise the management, facilities and development of public beaches. While taking into consideration the public demand for leisure services and the promotion of water safety, the LCSD will also actively consider adding tourism elements to attract tourists and creating diversified beach facilities to make those suitable public beaches become ideal venues for hosting more activities, thereby attracting more members of the public and tourists to visit.