

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
20 April 2001**

Upgrading of Hong Kong's Sports Facilities

PURPOSE

This paper reports on progress in planning to enhance the choice of major sports venues in Hong Kong. It also deals with the planning of a major new stadium.

BACKGROUND

2. In our 2000 Policy Objectives for the Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation, we advised that we had commissioned a consultancy study on the requirements for major new sports and recreation venues, including the need for a major stadium in Hong Kong. The aim of the study was to obtain expert advice on the need for major new sports and recreational venues over the next five to ten years. The specific objectives of the study are summarized at Annex A.

PRESENT POSITION

3. Our consultants (Urbis Limited) have recently delivered their initial findings and have advised that in order to position ourselves as a major events and sports centre the SAR requires a new stadium. In addition, there is demand for a new multi-purpose arena to cater for sports and entertainment events. Urbis have also recommended that we consider building other venues to help promote sports development.

Summary of Initial Findings

(a) New Stadium

4. The Urbis team considers that the current Hong Kong Stadium is not adequate to meet the SAR's future needs for a major events venue. The main problems with the stadium are -

- lack of design flexibility (for example, the lack of a running track or ability to change seating configurations)
- environmental constraints on stadium operation - in particular, noise problems – which stem largely from its location
- shortage of ancillary facilities which could help generate additional operating revenue – again, this is due in large part to the location of the stadium, which allows no room for the development of complementary facilities.

5. Given the problems with the current stadium and having studied the potential for the SAR to host major events in the future, the consultants will make recommendations on the appropriate scale and location of a potential replacement venue for the Hong Kong Stadium. In particular, we will need to identify a site for the new venue which is suitable in terms of accessibility, supporting infrastructure, surrounding environment and size of site area. The availability of the site for development, convenience of location and lack of environmental constraints on the potential stadium operation will also be key factors for consideration.

(b) New Multi-purpose Arena

6. Having consulted local sports associations and assessed likely demand, the consultants have found that there is scope for developing a new, multi-purpose to replace the Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Wan Chai. The new arena could host international and local sports and entertainment events requiring seating capacity of 5,000 to 10,000 spectators. This could be an indoor arena with a retractable roof system to allow for hosting major events for cycling, basketball, tennis and other sports which currently lack good quality facilities.

(c) Other Facilities

7. The consultants have also considered a number of other initial recommendations regarding venue development, viz -

- development of sports and recreational venues such as an "X-games" centre (for skate-boarding, roller-skating, BMX cycling), a go-kart track or a winter sports complex, recognizing the local demand for facilities for such sports
- an international regatta centre for rowing, canoe and dragon boat training and events
- certain existing venues to be upgraded and provided with improved back-up facilities - e.g., the Victoria Park swimming complex
- Hong Kong's sports associations to be encouraged to bid to bring more international events to the SAR
- a computerized planning system that may be developed to facilitate future planning and construction of sports venues.

WAY FORWARD

8. A Steering Group led by the Home Affairs Bureau is supervising the preparation of Urbis's final report. Both the Hong Kong Sports Development Board and the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China are represented on this Group.

9. We are currently discussing Urbis's findings with relevant bureaux and departments. We aim to complete the study shortly and give a detailed presentation to Members of this Panel thereafter.

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The main objectives of the study are as follows –

- to assess and identify the feasibility of Hong Kong establishing itself as a venue for international sports events.
- to undertake an inventory of current sports events and facilities to establish the usability of such facilities for international events.
- to undertake a survey of "National" Sports Associations in Hong Kong to assess the degree to which they consider there are shortfalls in provision and sports policy.
- assess international sports venues to evaluate their operation and management
- to identify the nature and types of event for which there is demand in the Special Administrative Region but which cannot be staged as appropriate venues do not exist.
- to conclude, respective to potential demand and the level of competition, the types of venue which could possibly be introduced in Hong Kong.
- to establish the degree to which current facilities in Hong Kong could be upgraded to a standard acceptable to international sports governing bodies.
- to establish the location and need for new event spaces and venues that would be required to host international sports events.