

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
12 June 2001**

Upgrading of Hong Kong's Sports Facilities

**Consultancy Study on the Requirements for
Major New Sports and Recreation Venues**

PURPOSE

This paper reports on the recommendations of a consultancy study on the requirements for major new sports and recreation venues, including the need for a major new stadium in Hong Kong.

BACKGROUND

2. On 20 April 2001, we briefed Members on the initial findings of this study and undertook to give a detailed presentation to this Panel once the study had been completed. At the same meeting, the Administration was requested to provide information on the proportion of resources allocated to constructing major sports and recreation facilities vis-à-vis district-level sports and recreation facilities.

PRESENT POSITION

3. Our consultants (Urbis Limited) delivered their final report on 23 May. A copy of the Executive Summary is at Annex A, and the full report will be made available to the LegCo Secretariat. The principal recommendations of the study are as follows -

- A new multi-purpose stadium integrating various sports and recreational functions should be constructed promptly on the South East Kowloon Development. It should have a seating capacity of about 50,000, and should symbolize the S.A.R.'s commitment to sport.
- Several other new sports venues including a 5,000 seat multi-purpose arena, a regatta centre and a world-class swimming complex should be developed to enable the S.A.R. to host major international events. The swimming complex could be developed in South East Kowloon along with the stadium.

- Second tier sports facilities should be upgraded, and where practicable put into private management. Use of facilities for training purposes should be promoted, including the development of centres of excellence.
- The SAR should promote Hong Kong as a venue for major games by bidding to host either single-event or multiple-event international games.
- Privatization and commercialization programmes should be implemented at existing and future venues.
- A programme to promote sport and sport culture should be promptly instituted.

Summary of 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 (e.g., the lack of a running track or ability to change seating configurations), environmental constraints on stadium operation - especially noise problems which stem largely from its location, accessibility and a shortage of ancillary 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 have recommended that a stadium with capacity for about 50,000 spectators and with a retractable roof be built in SE Kowloon as a replacement venue for the Hong Kong Stadium. A site that has been reserved for a stadium on the SE Kowloon Development at the former Kai Tak airport is suitable in terms of accessibility, supporting infrastructure, surrounding environment and size of site area. The consultants have proposed that the existing HK Stadium site could be used as a financing resource to meet the cost of building the new stadium. The consultants have further suggested using a "Build-Operate-Transfer" approach to encourage involvement by the private sector in the construction and subsequent management of the facility for an appropriate negotiated period.

(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 arena in Mei Foo 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 spectators, with expandable seating if necessary. Subject to the venue design, the seating capacity and lay-out could be adjusted when necessary to cater for specific uses. This could be an indoor arena with a retractable roof to allow Hong Kong to host major events for cycling, basketball, tennis and other sports which currently lack top quality facilities.

(c) Other Facilities

7. The consultants have also made a number of other recommendations regarding venue development, viz –

- new types of sports and recreational venues could be developed on strategic recreational sites, for example, an "X-games" centre (for skate-boarding, roller-skating, BMX cycling) in Tuen Mun and a go-kart track at the Pak Shek Kok reclamation site at Tai Po, recognizing the local demand for facilities for such sports
- an international regatta centre for rowing, canoe and dragon boat training and events could be developed alongside the Shing Mun River at Sha Tin
- certain existing venues should be renovated and provided with improved facilities - e.g., the Victoria Park swimming complex and the Mong Kok Stadium
- Hong Kong's sports associations should be encouraged to bid to bring international events to the SAR

8. Urbis have also recommended that the Government develop a strategy to promote sport as a fundamental component of daily life. In this connection, the Home Affairs Bureau has in April established a Sports Policy Review Team to begin work on formulating a long-term strategy for sports development. The team is currently consulting local and overseas sports organizations and other interested parties on issues related to sports policy, with a view to issuing a report before the end of this year.

Capital Works Expenditure

9. In response to Members' request to provide information on resources allocated to constructing major sports and recreation facilities vis-à-vis sports and recreation facilities at community level, we can only provide a

rough comparison based on historical data. According to Urbis, the cost of providing the major new venues recommended in their study is estimated at some \$3.7 to \$4.7 billion over ten years. Based on current spending patterns on community facilities, excluding those contractual commitments previously made by the former Provisional Municipal Councils, the commitment for community sports and leisure facilities currently averages some \$1.4 billion per annum. In accordance with current procedures, any proposed project, regardless of scale, would have to satisfy the relevant requirements in respect of feasibility studies and the resource allocation process.

WAY FORWARD

10. We shall consider the consultants' findings in the context of the overall policy review being conducted by the Home Affairs Bureau's Sports Policy Review Team. As noted above, this team will prepare a report on sports development strategies for Hong Kong for wide public consultation, and we aim to issue the report before the end of this year.

6 June 2001