

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)251/07-08
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 18 June 2007, at 11:15 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man
- Members absent** : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Item V
Home Affairs Bureau
Mrs Carrie LAM
Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Mrs Agnes ALLCOCK
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (2)

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Henry CHEUNG
Senior Veterinary Officer (SD)1

Department of Health

Dr Thomas TSANG
Controller, Centre for Health Protection

Hong Kong Police Force

Mr Bill SUEN
Commandant (Police Tactical Unit)

Equestrian Events (HK) of the Games of the XXIX
Olympiad Company Limited

Mr W K LAM
Chief Executive Officer

Item VI

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Esther LEUNG Yuet-yin
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

Ms Cecilia IP Pui-ching
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs

Professor John LEONG Chi-yan, JP
Chairman of Committee on Libraries

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr CHUNG Ling-hoi, JP
Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Culture)

Mr LEE Yuk-man
Assistant Director (Libraries and Development)

Item VII

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Esther LEUNG Yuet-yin
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

Ms Elsa WONG Sui-ping
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs

Dr Philip WU Po-him, BBS, JP
Chairman of the Committee on Museums

Mr Vincent LO, BBS, JP
Convenor of the Subcommittee on Governance of
Museum Services

Mr Tony CHAN
Convenor of the Subcommittee on Development
Strategy of Museum Services

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr CHUNG Ling-hoi, JP
Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Culture)

Dr Louis NG Chi-wa
Assistant Director (Heritage & Museums)

**Clerk in
attendance** : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

**Staff in
attendance** : Ms Joanne MAK
Senior Council Secretary (2)2

Ms Anna CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2)2

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1980/06-07]

The minutes of the meeting on 13 April 2007 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1914/06-07(01)]

2. Members noted a written submission [LC Paper No. CB(2)1914/06-07(01)] provided by the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)2042/06-07]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for Friday on 13 July 2007 at 10:45 am -

- (a) upgrade of film/TV production and post-production equipment in the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts; and
- (b) issues relating to implementation of the Building Management (Amendment) Ordinance 2005.

IV. Proposal to undertake overseas duty visit

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2042/06-07(01)]

4. The Chairman said that, to follow up on Professor Patrick LAU's proposal for the Panel to undertake a duty visit in the summer recess to study overseas experience in built heritage conservation, the Clerk had prepared a paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2042/06-07(01)] setting out two options and a rough cost estimate for members' consideration.

5. The Chairman further said that, after consideration of the desirability of the three places explored to be visited in the paper, i.e. Athens, Rome and Munich, as well as the tight time frame, members might wish to consider visiting Athens only which is a city renowned for heritage conservation.

6. Mr James TO expressed concern that it was not appropriate for Hong Kong to make reference to the conservation experience of Athens given that the heritage there was generally over a thousand years old, whereas Hong Kong's was in general only a few decades old. He considered that it would be more fruitful for Hong Kong to learn from the conservation experience of places with

Action

RLSD

similar background and their experience of engaging the community in the course of conservation work. Ms Emily LAU shared Mr TO's concern. She remarked that the Panel should not make a hasty decision in respect of the place to be visited. Mr TO suggested that RLSD be requested to conduct research to identify appropriate places for members' further consideration. Members agreed. Members further agreed that, as further research work would be required, the Panel would not conduct an overseas duty visit in this summer recess.

V. Update on the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2041/06-07(01) & CB(2)2042/06-07(02)]

Briefing by the Administration

7. Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs (PSHA) briefed members on the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events (the 2008 Events) co-hosted by the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) in 2008 and the 2007 Event entitled "Good Luck Beijing – HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup" (the 2007 Event) to be held in August 2007. The Administration also presented a video on the preparation work for the Events.

8. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Equestrian Events (Hong Kong) of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited (the Equestrian Company) further briefed members on the implementation of the arrangements for co-hosting the 2008 Events in Hong Kong and the consultation work involved with all major stakeholders.

Discussion

Financial implications

9. Referring to paragraphs 31 to 34 of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2041/06-07(01)], Miss TAM Heung-man raised the following questions -

- (a) whether the Administration would need to apply for additional funds from the Legislative Council (LegCo) to meet the funding requirements arising from performing the necessary government functions in staging the 2008 Events; and
- (b) for what purposes the funds raised under the Equestrian Sponsorship Programme (ESP) would be used.

10. PSHA replied that there would be no need to further apply for funds from LegCo, as the financial implications arising from performing the necessary government functions e.g. immigration, quarantine and security, etc.

Action

would be met by the funding from the operating expenditure envelopes of the relevant bureaux and departments. She said that all funds received under ESP would be used by the Equestrian Company. Education and community involvement activities which aimed to promote Olympism and the Events would be supported by the 2008 Beijing Olympic Equestrian Events Hong Kong Fund (the Fund) which was set up in 2006 for the public to make donations.

11. Mr Albert CHAN said that he had opposed the co-hosting of the 2008 Events for all these years. He criticised the Administration for devoting considerable amount of community resources for staging 2008 the Events while ignoring the hardship of the poor. He considered that Hong Kong people should be given the full picture of how much community resources as a whole would be used for staging the 2008 Events. The Administration should therefore provide detailed information on the actual manpower and financial resources deployed by government departments and public-funded organizations, as well as the funding sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) for staging the 2008 Events.

12. PSHA said that, in the course of making the preparation work, she deeply felt that the sports sector and the community were very proud of HKSAR having the opportunity of co-hosting the 2008 Events in Hong Kong. She believed that Mr CHAN's view was not the mainstream opinion of the community. PSHA also explained that details of donations received under ESP were not available as the Programme had only been launched recently. She assured members that there were no hidden costs.

13. Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that he disagreed with Mr Albert CHAN and he considered that it was very meaningful for HKSAR to have this opportunity of co-hosting the 2008 Events. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Ms Emily LAU also welcomed the opportunity for HKSAR to co-host the 2008 Events in Hong Kong.

Ticketing arrangement

14. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the prices of tickets of the 2008 Events and the estimated market response to the ticket sale. CEO of the Equestrian Company said that the price range would be between \$50 and \$400 and it was expected that the Events would attract both local and overseas spectators.

Consultation with district councils (DCs) concerned and minimising impact on residents

15. Ms Emily LAU asked about the measures to be taken to minimise the impact of the 2008 Events on the local residents and the concerns the two DCs had raised.

Action

16. CEO of the Equestrian Company replied that some inconvenience might be caused to local residents by the transport and traffic arrangements around the two competition venues and in the vicinity of the non-competition venues, which might involve some traffic diversion, temporary road closure and road improvement work. He said that the North and Sha Tin DCs had been consulted and they had suggested ways to minimise the impact on local residents. Ms Emily LAU stressed that road closure should be avoided as far as possible in order not to create too much inconvenience to local residents.

17. CEO of the Equestrian Company explained that complete closure of road would not be necessary unless there was unforeseeable situation of emergency. It was anticipated that some bus stops might need to be relocated or suspended for use temporarily, and one of the driveways might need to be closed for use. Relevant DCs would be consulted in order to minimize the inconvenience caused to local residents. He further said that the Royal Park Hotel in Sha Tin would be rented and used as the Hong Kong Olympic Village for the 2008 Events, and the hotel facilities would be reserved for use by the athletes and relevant personnel only during the rental period. He said that as to the 2007 Event, only some of the Royal Park Hotel rooms would be reserved and the use of other parts of the hotel by the public would be unaffected.

Provision of support for disabled athletes participating in the Events

18. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the Administration would consider providing assistance to Mr YIP Siu-hong, a Hong Kong disabled elite athlete who had won prizes in many international para-equestrian competitions and would also compete in the 2008 Events. He suggested that, as Mr YIP was unable to buy a new horse to replace his existing one which was already too old to compete, the Administration should provide assistance in this regard.

19. PSHA explained that, if the Administration agreed to do so, this might invite questions as to whether the same assistance should be made to other participants of the 2008 Events for the sake of fairness. She said that the Riding for the Disabled Association (the Association) had been providing support and assistance to disabled equestrian athletes.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that, as Mr YIP Siu-hong would so far be the only Chinese equestrian athlete to take part in the 2008 Events, the Administration should show more support for Mr YIP who was an outstanding disabled elite athlete in Hong Kong. He pointed out that, if Mr YIP could not purchase a new competition horse, he would not be able to compete in the Events. He took the view that there would not be disputes even if the Administration purchased a new competition horse for Mr YIP to take part in the Events. He considered that the Administration should at least provide matching grants to assist the Association in making the purchase, and the same assistance should also be made to any other needy local equestrian athletes who

Action

were striving to compete in the Events, in order to show the Government's support for local athletes.

21. PSHA pledged that the Administration would continue to provide full support to fund raising activities organised by the Association. CEO of the Equestrian Company supplemented that, as far as he knew, the Association would be able to raise adequate funds to purchase or rent a new competition horse for Mr YIP for the Events.

Medical services

22. Mr WONG Ting-kwong asked whether the Government would be responsible for the provision of necessary medical care to athletes during their stay in Hong Kong. CEO of the Equestrian Company replied that, according to the agreement between HKSAR Government and the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), the hosting city was obliged to provide free medical services to athletes during their stay in Hong Kong for the 2008 Events. He supplemented that it was very rare for serious accidents to occur during international equestrian competitions as the organising authorities always attached great importance to the safety of the athletes. In response to Mr WONG's enquiry, CEO of the Equestrian Company said that the Government was only obliged to provide necessary services through the public medical system.

Security and quarantine arrangements

23. Referring to paragraph 19 of the Administration's paper, Miss TAM Heung-man enquired about the measures to be taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among the competition and local horses.

24. Senior Veterinary Officer (SD)1 said that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department was the Quarantine Authority in Hong Kong. Under the agreed quarantine protocol, competition horses would have to undergo a seven-day pre-export quarantine at approved overseas stables, and a 10-day post arrival isolation (PAI) in Hong Kong. During the PAI period, training and competition were allowed subject to the implementation of certain biosecurity measures to ensure that both competition and local horses would be adequately protected and to maintain the good equine health status in Hong Kong.

25. As regards the meteorological services, Ms Emily LAU asked whether any special arrangements had been planned to resolve problems arising from the hot and humid weather in Hong Kong during the period of the 2008 Events, i.e. August.

26. CEO of the Equestrian Company said that the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) had conducted prior research, data acquisition and analysis regarding the weather information during the games period. In addition, HKO would

Action

provide venue-specific weather forecasts and general weather information during the games period. He added that the Olympic Equestrian Events would take place from 9 to 23 August 2008 with the last two days reserved as contingency in case of inclement weather conditions during the competition days. Moreover, competitions would be held either early in the morning or in the evening to avoid the intense daytime heat.

27. The Chairman asked whether a task force would be set up to oversee the security arrangements and to draw up venue security plans. PSHA responded that, while the Equestrian Company would be responsible for security inside the competition and non-competition venues, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) would be responsible for the security of the 2008 Events, including monitoring the security arrangements made by the Equestrian Company. CEO of the Equestrian Company and Commandant (Police Tactical Unit) pointed out that HKPF and the Equestrian Company had been working closely on the development of venue security plans, operational protocols as well as relevant contingency plans. HKPF would provide full support to the Equestrian Company in maintenance of order inside the competition and non-competition venues. He added that the risk level of the 2008 Events was assessed to be at medium level, but it would be reviewed from time to time.

VI. Future development of public libraries

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2042/06-07(03) & (04)]

Briefing by the Administration

28. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3) (DSHA(3)) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2042/06-07(03)]. She said that the Administration had accepted in principle all the recommendations made in the Recommendation Report (the Report) of the Committee on Libraries (the Committee). Chairman of the Committee further briefed members on the major recommendations of the Report.

Discussion

Bringing library services to the local communities

29. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the Administration would implement recommendations including to arrange book delivery service to homes of the elderly and those with physical disabilities, and to make available more books with large-print and on areas of interest to elderly users.

30. Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Culture) (DDLCS(C)) responded that the Administration would set priorities in the implementation of various recommendations, taking into account the availability of resources. In response to Dr CHEUNG's suggestion of enhancing the book reservation

Action

service to facilitate users with disabilities, DDLCS(C) said that the existing book reservation service could already be done through Internet. He added that consideration could be given to conducting briefings for users with disabilities to familiarise them with the book reservation service.

31. Referring to the Committee's recommendation that the Administration should explore more opportunities to provide library services at convenient locations including shopping malls as appropriate, Ms Emily LAU asked whether the rental rate of such private venues would be too expensive and whether the Administration was planning to build fewer large public libraries in future. DDLCS(C) responded that consideration would be given to providing library services at shopping malls only if there were no better alternatives and if resources permitted.

32. Miss TAM Heung-man queried whether there was a genuine need to engage public relations firms to promote public library services as there were already many people using library services. DSHA(3) said that it was the Committee's view that publicity efforts should be enhanced by increasing media coverage for the purpose of promoting reading and literary arts, and the Administration had agreed with such a view.

Better library services

33. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the Administration had any plans to enhance existing library facilities to facilitate users with physical disabilities. He pointed out that the problems with some of the existing libraries included inadequate space between book shelves for access by wheelchairs, and the unavailability of the necessary software at some libraries which enabled the blind to view the catalogues of library collections.

34. DDLCS(C) responded that the construction of new libraries would all comply with the requirements of the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997. He added that for those located in non-government buildings, the Administration would also ensure that these new libraries were accessible as far as possible to users with physical disabilities.

35. Referring to paragraph 11 of the Administration's paper, Mr WONG Ting-kwong asked whether there was any plan to expand the existing public libraries by way of renovation or relocation in order to meet the new space provision of new libraries under planning.

36. DDLCS(C) responded that the Administration would seek to improve the layout and facilities of existing public libraries by refurbishment/renovation. He added that, when planning for the relocation of any existing public library, the Administration would also take the opportunity to explore a suitable location to allow for enhancement of the space provision of the library.

Action

37. Mr Albert CHAN said that there was general feedback that most of the seats in public libraries were very often occupied by students and newspaper/magazine readers. He suggested that the Administration should consider renting vacant shop premises in public housing estates for conversion into newspapers and periodicals sections or students' study rooms in order to ease the problem of overcrowding in public libraries.

38. In response to Mr Albert CHAN's question, Assistant Director (Libraries and Development) said that there were more than 10 000 electronic books in public libraries. He added that public libraries were enhancing electronic resources to meet the rising community demand for digitized library materials.

39. Ms Emily LAU asked whether consideration would be given to extending the opening hours of public libraries to facilitate the use of library services by the public. DDLCS(C) responded that the opening hours of public libraries in the urban and NT region were different. He pointed out that, as certain DCs had already started taking up the co-management of their district libraries, the Administration would liaise closely with those DCs on the opening hours of their district libraries, and through application of DC funds, make adjustments to the hours as appropriate. For example, Sai Kung DC had recently extended the opening hours of their district libraries on a trial basis to meet the service needs of local residents.

40. Mr Albert CHAN considered that public libraries should open everyday and their opening hours should be extended on public holidays. He suggested that more part-time staff members should be recruited for this purpose.

Mode of governance

41. In response to concern raised by Miss TAM Heung-man, DSHA(3) confirmed that, while the Consultancy Study in 2002 had recommended to consider the option of corporatisation, the Committee had come to the view that there was no imminent need for introducing any major institutional changes to the management of public libraries.

Recruitment of professional staff

42. Miss TAM Heung-man and Ms Emily LAU expressed concern about the observation that, compared with other major overseas metropolitan cities, Hong Kong public libraries had the lowest provision of full-time and professional staff. They asked whether the Administration considered it necessary to recruit more professional staff in order to match with the international standards.

43. DDLCS(C) responded that, subject to the availability of resources, the Administration would consider recruiting additional professional staff and training up more full-time staff with the required expertise. He said that the existing staff members were all well qualified as they had either completed the

Action

professional training or acquired adequate working experience through on-the-job training.

VII. Recommendation Report of Committee on Museums

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2042/06-07(05) & CB(2)2187/06-07(01)]

Briefing by the Administration

44. DSHA(3) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2042/06-07(05)]. She said that the Administration had accepted in principle a series of recommendations made in the Report of the Committee on Museums. She highlighted that the Administration would pay particular attention to the concerns of the serving museum staff towards the proposed changes to the existing governance framework of public museums. She said that it was the Administration's view that any institutional change should be carried out in a gradual manner with extensive consultations with staff and stakeholders. She pledged that the Administration would proactively consult all staff concerned on any proposed changes in governance.

45. Chairman of the Committee on Museums briefed members on the major recommendations of the Report. He highlighted that the Committee recommended that a review on the manpower requirements should be conducted with a view to drawing up a manpower strategy plan for the coming 10 years, with specific focus on arrangements to attract high level talent and to sustain a pool of professional staff and expertise. The Committee was of the view that, in the course of conducting the manpower review, the Administration should conduct a comprehensive consultation and maintain regular dialogues with museum staff.

46. Members noted that Government Cultural Services Grades' Alliance had provided a written submission [LC Paper No. CB(2)2187/06-07(01)] to the Panel.

Discussion

Mode of governance of public museums

47. Referring to paragraph 19 of the Administration's paper, Miss TAM Heung-man asked about the timetable for the establishment of a statutory Museums Board.

48. DSHA(3) replied that the Committee on Museums had recommended that a statutory Museums Board should be set up in three years' time as far as practicable to take on the operation and management responsibility of public museums. She said that, while the Administration would endeavour to set up a statutory Museums Board in three years' time, the Administration might take a longer time, say, five years, to complete the entire transformation process

Action

having regard to the need to set up a Provisional Museums Board, carry out a detailed planning study on how each cluster of museums should be aligned and transferred, draft the enabling legislation and resolve issues relating to the transitional arrangements for existing museum staff. She added that the Administration would further consult the Panel when it had drawn up a concrete implementation plan for taking forward this recommendation.

49. Ms Emily LAU expressed support for reviewing the existing governance structure of public museums to keep pace with the changing needs and expectations of the community. She requested the Administration to conduct more staff consultations and to pay careful attention to the concerns of the serving museum staff towards any proposed changes. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that the Administration should strive to enhance the transparency of the transformation process by, e.g. conducting open public forums for the public to give views from the users' point of view. DSHA(3) agreed to consider members' suggestions.

Promotion of patronage and performance enhancement

50. Ms Emily LAU said that she had the impression that the general attendance of the public museums was not very high and usually it was exhibition of some famous collections on loan from overseas major museums that had attracted more visitors. She asked whether the Administration would consider increasing the allocation of resources to public museums to enhance the collections for the purpose of organizing more attractive exhibitions.

51. DDLCS(C) responded that, as also recognised by the Committee on Museums, the public museums were generally well-received by the visiting public. In the past few years, the attendance of all public museums had been over four million each year. For example, the annual attendances for Hong Kong Museum of Art and Science Museum were over 300 000 and 700 000 respectively. However, the Administration considered that there was still room for further improving the public museum services. DDLCS(C) said that the Administration would continue to organise diverse and vibrant exhibitions to promote patronage and to increase museum collections for exhibition and display. DDLCS(C) informed members that, in the past few years, expenditure on purchasing collections for Hong Kong Museum of Art had amounted to over 2% of its annual expenditure. Besides, there were from time to time donations of valuable works of art or historic items from artists or private owners.

52. Ms Emily LAU suggested that art teachers of schools should be issued passes for free access to all public museums in order to boost their patronage which, in turn, would contribute to the promotion of art among students. DDLCS(C) responded that the arrangement could be made to issue the passes provided that the schools concerned could submit the required supporting documents.

Action

53. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that, in addition to conducting opinion surveys, a standing consultation mechanism for collection of views of visitors on the overall performance of the museums should be put in place for the purpose of evaluation and enhancement of performance.

54. Dr Fernando CHEUNG noted that the Committee's recommendation that the Administration should promote the gift shop service and improve the catering service as a means to broaden income base. He suggested that consideration should be given to encouraging the development of social enterprises through these business operations to create employment opportunities for vulnerable groups. DDLCS(C) agreed to explore the practicability of the suggestion.

Accessibility of public museums

55. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern whether all the existing public museums, particularly those built a long time ago, were accessible to visitors with physical disabilities. DDLCS(C) responded that in general the existing public museums were accessible to visitors with physical disabilities. For the old ones, such as the Hong Kong Railway Museum and the Sam Tung Uk Museum, they also had no problems of accessibility as they had no upper ground levels.

Private museums

56. Miss TAM Heung-man asked whether any measures would be taken to encourage the establishment of private museums in order to enrich the cultural life of Hong Kong people.

57. DSHA(3) explained that the terms of reference of the Committee on Museums were to advise on the provision of public museum services only. She said that, while the Administration welcomed the setting up of private museums in Hong Kong, there was not a mechanism in place in the Government for supporting the operation of private museums. This subject would need to be separately tackled, involving careful deliberations on various aspects such as the definition of and regulatory mechanism for museums.

58. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:18 pm.