

**Extract from minutes of meeting of the
Panel on Home Affairs held on 18 June 2007**

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

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

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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

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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. 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.

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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.

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

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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 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

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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 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.

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