

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Home Affairs

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Tuesday, 21 September 2010, at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon WONG Yuk-man
- Members absent** : Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
- Public officers attending** : Home Affairs Bureau
Mr TSANG Tak-sing, JP
Secretary for Home Affairs

Ms Florence HUI Hiu-fai, JP
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr Eddy CHAN Yuk-tak
Head, Asian Games Bid Team

Mr Jonathan McKinley, JP
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (2)

Mr CHAN Jick-chi, Jack
Deputy Head, Asian Games Bid Team

Clerk in attendance : Ms Betty FONG
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in attendance : Miss Vivien POON
Council Secretary (2)2

Miss Cerry YU
Legislative Assistant (2)2

Miss Monique TSEUNG
Clerical Assistant (2)2

I. Briefing on the Administration's public consultation paper "Should Hong Kong bid to host the 2023 Asian Games?"

The Chairman declared that he was serving on the 2023 Asian Games Provisional Bid Committee. He then invited the Administration to brief members on the public consultation paper "Should Hong Kong bid to host the 2023 Asian Games?" [LC Paper No. CB(2)2292/09-10(01)] tabled at the meeting.

2. Head, Asian Games Bid Team conducted a Powerpoint presentation to brief members on the salient points set out in the consultation paper. He said that the hosting of the Asian Games would present opportunities for furthering sports development in Hong Kong, by way of encouraging athletes to raise their levels of performance, expediting the upgrading of sports facilities and promoting public participation in sport. The successful hosting of the Games would also boost civic pride and social cohesion, and bring direct and indirect economic benefits to Hong Kong. Head, Asian Games Bid Team also

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explained briefly the preliminary financial assessment and provision of venues for hosting the 2023 Asian Games, which were summarized as follows -

- (a) the direct total costs for hosting the Asian Games would be in the order of \$13.7 to 14.5 billion at current price level, made up of \$3.2 to 4 billion operating cost and \$10.5 billion capital cost. Part of the operating cost could be offset by ticket sales, merchandising and sponsorships, which would amount to \$0.7 to 0.86 billion at current price level;
- (b) a three-pronged strategy would be adopted in the provision of the venues for the Games, viz. making optimal use of existing Government and non-Government sports facilities; expanding/upgrading three existing sports venues/facilities to meet the requirements for staging the Games; and speeding up consideration of redevelopment and new projects;
- (c) for the hosting of the Games, the Administration would bring forward sports projects identified for long-term development such as the Kai Tak Multi-purpose Stadium Complex ("MPSC") and other facilities, with estimated cost at about \$30.17 billion. In addition to the aforementioned venues, consideration would also be given to co-hosting a few sports events with neighbouring cities in the Mainland and Macau; and
- (d) other costs for hosting the Games included the requirement to provide an athletes' village comprising 3 000 flat units to accommodate the delegations; and recurrent cost of managing and maintaining upgraded sports facilities after the Games, which would amount to \$15.6 million per annum.

3. At members' request, the Chairman decided to extend the meeting for 30 minutes beyond its appointed ending time at 3:30 pm in accordance with House Rule 24A(b).

Public consultation schedule

4. Members in general considered that the six-week public consultation period on whether Hong Kong should bid to host the Asian Games, a major sport event involving substantial investments, was too short. Ms Emily LAU and the Deputy Chairman asked the Administration to explain the reason for not initiating the consultation exercise earlier. Ms LAU also expressed concern about the lack of detailed breakdown on the cost estimate for the Games. Miss Tanya CHAN was doubtful about the sincerity of the Administration in consulting the public on the issue, given the lack of informative details on the financial implications of the Games, and the short duration of the consultation

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period. She urged the Administration to provide a detailed financial assessment before the end of the public consultation. Ms Cyd HO considered that the Administration should provide detailed justifications for its proposals and a range of cost estimates covering different scenarios. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed regret at the lack of sufficient time for public consultation. The Chairman shared the view that further information on the financial implication of the Games should be provided in order to facilitate the deliberation on the issue.

5. Secretary for Home Affairs ("SHA") said that in comparison with the bid for the 2006 Asian Games in 2000, the Government had made concerted efforts to improve the transparency and consultation process in the proposed bid for the 2023 Asian Games. For instance, for the preparation of the consultation paper, the Asian Games Bid Team had worked in close collaboration and liaison with a number of relevant parties, including the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, and in particular the respective National Sports Associations ("NSAs") to solicit their views on the sports to be included in the Games, the suitable venues for staging these sports, as well as their respective role in the Games.

6. SHA and Head, Asian Games Bid Team further advised that the preparatory tasks (including arrangements to implement the public consultation) undertaken by the Asian Games Bid Team were time-critical and intensive. Taking into account the requirement for the submission of the formal bid document to OCA by 30 January 2011, arrangement was made for the public consultation to be concluded in early November 2010, after which the Administration would consolidate the views collected. If the public was supportive to the bid, the Administration would further consult the Panel in November 2010 on the proposal, and seek the endorsement of the Finance Committee around December 2010/January 2011. A detailed financial assessment for hosting the Games, which was currently prepared by a Consultant commissioned by the Government, would be available for members' reference. Moreover, in the first half of 2011, the Government would implement a concerted lobbying and public relations campaign targeted at the other OCA members in the run-up to the OCA meeting in July 2011 when OCA would award the hosting rights.

[Post-meeting note: In the light of Members' and public's views that the original six-week consultation period was too short, the Home Affairs Bureau had extended the consultation period for four weeks until 1 December 2010, resulting in a two-and-a-half month public consultation period. According to the Administration, the extension was made possible as the OCA had extended the submission deadline of the formal bid document to 15 February 2011, and the Administration had compressed the lead time required for the tasks ahead upon the close of the consultation period. In response to Members' request for more information regarding the financial

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implications of hosting the 2023 Asian Games in Hong Kong, the Administration provided such information to the Panel dated 8 October 2010.]

7. Ms Emily LAU said that in view of the diverse demands in the society for more public funds to address far more pressing issues such as poverty alleviation, the Democratic Party was highly concerned about the substantial resources to be committed for hosting the Asian Games. Ms LAU called for greater transparency in the disclosure of the financial estimates involved in hosting the Games, and the conduct of a public hearing to solicit the views of District Councils ("DCs"), NSAs and athletes on the issue. She also urged the Administration to provide further information on the financial implications of the Games, as well as the complementary measures to promote sport development to facilitate a more meaningful consultation.

8. Ms Cyd HO considered that it would be difficult for the public to support the hosting of the Games in the absence of strong justifications on how Hong Kong would benefit from the huge resources to be put into the Games, and the absence of effective measures to address issues of wide public concern. Mr WONG Kwok-hing opined that the Administration should consider the hosting of the Games with due care and caution, in particular its capability in the provision of competition venues to meet the standards for the Games. The Deputy Chairman raised concern that the Administration might have underestimated the financial implications for hosting the Games, as the infrastructural costs associated with the staging of the Games, the construction costs for the athletes' village, and the possible escalation in material and construction costs had not been accounted for in the estimate. Given many of the existing sports facilities such as the Hong Kong Coliseum and the Hong Kong Stadium were already under-utilized, he was worried that the costly venues/facilities for the Games might become "white elephants" after the event. While Mrs Sophie LEUNG expressed support in principle for the proposed bid, she considered that the Administration should allow adequate provisions in the estimate for contingencies, and the maintenance of the venues/facilities for the Games. She also hoped that the Administration would explore other sources of funding/sponsorship beyond the business sector.

9. SHA reiterated that hosting Asian Games would give a strong boost to our sport development, including the early implementation of the sports facilities under planning. He considered that efforts to alleviate poverty should not preclude initiatives to promote sports development. On the allocation of resources to Asian Games, SHA said that drawing the experience from the 2009 East Asian Games ("EAG"), the Government would not bring in extravagant infrastructure that created no long-term benefits. He stressed that the Asian Games facilities would never become "white elephants". Instead, they would be used by athletes and residents at the community level in the long run after the Games.

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10. SHA further advised that the Games typically lasted for two weeks, with participation by over 45 countries and regions. If Hong Kong were to successfully host the Games, the Government would be required to provide essential services in areas such as transport, security, media support, medical services and technology and communications. The Government would also need to ensure that the venues were of a suitable quality and capacity to staging an event of this magnitude, as well as to plan for the hosting of the Asian Para Games shortly after the Games. Given the much larger scale of the Games, the estimated operating cost (at around \$3.2 to 4 billion) was ten times of that for the 2009 EAG. As for the \$10.5 billion estimated capital cost, it was mainly required for temporary works on existing facilities and upgrading works to bring the proposed new venues up to Asian Games standards. Regarding the proposed MPSC at Kai Tak and other projects as set out in Annex C of the consultation paper, SHA pointed out that these facilities had long been identified for development/redevelopment to meet community needs, regardless of whether Hong Kong would host the Games. He assured members that the hosting of the Asian Games would not affect, but instead expedite these planned projects, many of which would be brought forward within the required timeframe of hosting the Asian Games in 2023.

Athletes' village and Asian Games venues

11. Ms Cyd HO opined that the consultation document should have included an estimate of the land premium involved if the development of the athletes' village was to be undertaken by a private developer. In view of the controversial nature of the private development mode, she had serious reservations about this option. Miss Tanya CHAN expressed similar concern. She suggested that the athletes' village should be developed by a public body, say the Hong Kong Housing Society, and that the units concerned should be converted into public housing after the Games to address the housing needs of the public. Ms Emily LAU, Ms Cyd HO and Professor Patrick LAU expressed support for the conversion of the athletes' village into public housing after the Games with a view to addressing the public's pressing demand for housing.

12. Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested that a comprehensive plan on how the athletes' village could be used to address the strong demand for public housing should be drawn up. He was also concerned about whether the existing facilities (such as the Victoria Park Swimming Pool Complex) would have sufficient capacity for hosting the Asian Games.

13. SHA responded that it would be premature to estimate the land premium involved at this stage, which was a complicated issue depending on the actual circumstances such as the future sites for the athletes' village, the design specifications, and adaptive/renovation works to the flats before putting them for sale. He further advised that it was a common practice to build non-luxury flats as athletes' village and for sale to the public after the event. In Hong Kong's bid for the 2006 Asian Games, it was suggested that athletes' flats

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be built by a private developer. For the 2023 Asian Games, there was a suggestion that a public body might take charge of planning, building and managing such units. The Administration remained open to these options.

Policy for long-term sports development

14. Mr WONG Sing-chi considered that as a matter of priority, the Administration should devise a long-term sports development policy and strategy for the next 13 years, with a view to addressing the long-standing shortage of sports and recreational facilities at district level, training of athletes, and promoting sport to the community in collaboration with districts, schools, and sports associations. He said that in view of these unresolved issues, the public would have reservations in supporting the bid for hosting the Games. Miss Tanya CHAN called for measures to rectify the disparity in the treatment of athletes with disabilities whose prize money was only a fraction of the award to their able-bodied counterparts, and enhance fairness/transparency in the selection of local athletes competing in international sports competitions. She also enquired about the Administration's long-term commitment in promoting sports development should Hong Kong decide not to submit a formal bid for the 2023 Asian Games, or the bid for the Games was unsuccessful.

15. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that the consultation paper had not addressed the issues of athletes training and audience building for sports events. Mrs Sophie LEUNG called for enhanced support for youth team sports such as football, while Ms Emily LAU urged the Government to step up its effort to enhance the career prospects for full-time athletes.

16. SHA said that while the hosting of the 2023 Asian Games would promote the three strategic directions for the long-term sports development in Hong Kong, viz. to help Hong Kong elite athletes achieve excellence; to develop a strong sporting culture in the community; and to raise Hong Kong's profile as a centre for international sports events, the Administration was fully committed to pursuing these policy directions, regardless of whether the bid for the event was successful. He added that in 2010-2011, a portion of the \$3 billion injection into the Arts and Sport Development Fund would be used to subsidize the development of team sports including football.

17. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (2) supplemented that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") was working in collaboration with schools and NSAs to encourage students' participation in sport through the Schools' Sports Programmes, which involved over 1 000 schools throughout Hong Kong. Moreover, the Sports Commission would review proposals to adopt a more strategic approach to providing sports facilities based on factors such as: districts' needs, demographic data, and age and gender related preferences. He said that the Administration would be glad to update members on the outcome of the Sports Commission's conclusions on this issue.

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Leisure and cultural services projects

18. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was worried that the preparatory work for hosting the Asian Games might further stretch resources to be committed to implementing outstanding leisure and cultural services ("LCS") projects of the former municipal councils. The Deputy Chairman shared similar concern, and asked the Administration as to whether the projects/works related to the Games would defer the implementation of community recreational and sports facilities, such as libraries and parks. Mr WONG Sing-chi cited various incidents of undue delay in the implementation of recreational and community facilities under the LCS projects in the North District and Tai Po. The Chairman urged the Administration to step up efforts to expedite the provision of sports and recreational facilities under the outstanding LCS projects to meet district needs.

19. SHA acknowledged the ongoing demand for sports and recreational facilities at district level. He explained that works related to the Asian Games should not defer, but instead complement the development/provision of sports and recreational facilities in the coming 13 years, for reasons that many of the existing venues would be upgraded or expanded for the Games, the implementation of many planned venues would be brought forward to tie in with the timeframe for the Games, and the venues for the Games would be utilized for other international sports events and elite training, as well as opened for public use after the Games. In response to Professor Patrick LAU's concern about the lack of basketball facilities of international competition standards, SHA said that three indoor sports centers (including basketball facilities) in Tai Po, Tin Shui Wai and Ma On Shan could be expanded/upgraded to international competition standards.

Other issues

20. Mr WONG Yuk-man opined that information about "Why Hong Kong should host the Games?" and "Can Hong Kong host the Games?" instead of "Should Hong Kong host the Games?" was more relevant to the public in considering the issue, and it would be more meaningful for the Administration to provide such information in the consultation paper. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the chance for Hong Kong to have a successful bid to host the Games. Miss Tanya CHAN considered that the three survey questions in Part VIII of the consultation document were not conducive to soliciting useful feedback from the public. Mr WONG Kwok-hing pointed out that the consultation document should have set out both the pros and cons for hosting the Games in order to present a more balanced perspective of the initiative to the public. Professor Patrick LAU considered that public views should be sought on measures (such as the provision of district facilities) to complement the hosting of the Games.

21. SHA said that the prior experience of hosting the 2009 EAG, and co-hosting the Equestrian Events of the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic

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Games had proved that Hong Kong possessed the capabilities and resources to organize large-scale international sports events. He was confident that Hong Kong stood a very good chance for a successful bid to host the Games.

22. Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered that LCSD, as one of the key departments in the preparatory work for the Asian Games, should take positive steps to resolve the management issues and enhance the cohesion among its staff, which comprised some 8 000 civil servants and some 12 000 contract/temporary staff. He further suggested that the Administration should solicit the support of the neighbouring cities in co-hosting the Games.

Way forward

23. To gauge the views of stakeholders on whether Hong Kong should bid to host the Asian Games, Ms Emily LAU suggested that the Panel should hold a special meeting with deputations (e.g. representatives from DCs, NSAs and athletes) before expiry of the consultation period on 3 November 2010. The Chairman suggested and members agreed to discuss the arrangements for the special meeting when the Panel reconvened after the summer recess in October 2010.

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II. Any other business

24. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:05 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 November 2010