

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)652/09-10(04)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 8 January 2010

Promotion of sports development

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the major views and concerns of Legislative Council (LegCo) Members on sports development in Hong Kong since April 2007. Discussions held by Members on the subject before that date are summarized in LC Paper No. CB(2)1493/06-07(04).

Background

2. Following a review on sports policy in 2002, the Administration has set three broad directions for the long term sports development in Hong Kong, namely to develop a strong sporting culture in the community; to achieve greater excellence by elite athletes; and to raise Hong Kong's international profile on sports. In July 2003, the Government announced its decision to establish a new administrative structure to promote a sustainable and community-wide sporting culture in Hong Kong.

3. Under the new structure, the then Hong Kong Sports Development Board (SDB), which was established in 1990 under the Hong Kong Sports Development Ordinance (Cap.1149) for the promotion and development of sports and physical recreation, was dissolved in June 2004; the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) was re-constituted to become an incorporated body in October 2004 to undertake matters pertaining to high performance sports training formerly under the auspices of SDB; and a new Sports Commission under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) was established in January 2005 to advise the Government on all

matters pertaining to sports development, including the policies, strategies implementation framework of sports development, and the provision of funding and resources in support of sports development.

Key initiatives on promoting sports development

Elite sports development

4. The Administration briefed members of the Home Affairs Panel (the Panel) in April 2007 on the progress of its initiatives to promote the development of elite sports in Hong Kong since the implementation of the new organisation structure described in paragraph 3. The key measures are as follows -

- (a) provision of an additional funding of \$40 million annually from 2007-2008 onwards to enhance support to elite athletes in key areas including financial assistance to elite athletes (\$20 million), athlete training and coaching support (\$6 million), as well as education opportunities and career development for elite athletes (\$14 million);
- (b) continued allocation of the sports portion of the Arts and Sport Development Fund to support elite athletes in their preparation and participation for major games;
- (c) implementation of a unified scheme (Elite Athletes Grants) to consolidate the different funding sources for elite athletes from April 2007 onwards;
- (d) establishment of the Olympians and Meritorious Athletes' Commission under the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) to recognize Hong Kong athletes' outstanding performances in international sports competitions, and to provide local top athletes with more opportunities for overseas exposure in both educational and sports participation, as well as further studies and development upon retirement from their athletes' careers;
- (e) implementation of measures by the eight higher education institutions funded by the University Grants to facilitate retired athletes to pursue higher education in Hong Kong; and

- (f) redevelopment of the HKSI to provide elite athletes with a quality training environment and support services. The project was scheduled for commencement in 2008 and completion in 2011.

5. In his reply to Hon Tanya CHAN's question raised at the Council meeting on 25 November 2009 on the development of sports, in particular elite sports, for preparing Hong Kong to bid for large-scale sports events in future, SHA explained the respective roles of the Government, National Sports Associations (NSAs) and HKSI in this regard. The salient points are set out below -

- (a) under the current policy framework for sports development, the NSAs played a leading role in setting the direction for the development of their respective sports whilst the Government played a supporting role by providing funding and venues, and by implementing other relevant measures. Through the Sports Subvention Scheme administered by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the NSAs received subventions for organising sports promotional activities and for other operational needs. The subvention in 2009-2010 was close to \$180 million;
- (b) as regards support for elite sports, the aim was to focus resources on sports with good potential or strong track records, and on individual athletes who had performed particularly well, with a view to raising Hong Kong athletes' chances of winning medals in international competitions. HKSI was responsible for support to elite sports and the development of athletes in Hong Kong; and
- (c) the Sports Committee had adopted a set of criteria for the selection of sports for HKSI support from 2005 onwards. Under the selection mechanism, billiard sports, athletics and karatedo had been selected as elite sports and, together with another 11 sports, would receive elite sports subvention for a four-year cycle starting from 2009. Furthermore, judo had been selected as an "up-and-coming" sport, which would receive additional subvention starting from 2009. Other sports could also become elite sports and receive additional subvention if they reached the standard specified in the criteria.

6. Members' views and concerns on the Administration's initiatives on the development of elite sports, as expressed at the Panel meetings in April and May

2007, and April and May 2008 are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Career development and education support for retired athletes

7. Members considered that the Administration should assist elite athletes in the pursuit of a descent living when they retired from their careers in sports, and urged the Administration to work out details of the retirement package for these athletes as soon as possible. Some members criticized the Administration for failing to address the major concern of junior athletes about their studies being adversely affected by the demanding sports training for becoming top athletes. They suggested that the Administration should consider providing university places for elite athletes to pursue further studies through commercial sponsorship or public funding. Other members considered that corporations should show support by way of offering employment opportunities to elite athletes when they retired from their sports careers.

8. The Administration responded that it was working out a comprehensive athlete retirement scheme in collaboration with SF&OC, and following up with the eight University Grants Committee-funded institutions on measures to facilitate retired athletes to pursue higher education in Hong Kong. The Administration also informed members that some corporations had expressed willingness to support retired athletes who wished to pursue a working career after retirement, by way of providing scholarship or on-the-job training. The Administration would draw up an appropriate scheme for the participation of these corporations.

Award schemes for elite athletes

9. A member suggested the setting up of a trust fund to provide grants to elite athletes who had achieved excellent results in international competitions in recognition of their efforts and achievements. In response, the Chief Executive of HKSI advised that HKSI had put in place award schemes for elite athletes, e.g. an elite athlete who won a gold medal in the Asian Games would be awarded \$250,000 and those who won silver or bronze would also be awarded. The Administration did not consider it desirable from the point of view of public finance management to use public money to provide monetary prizes, but agreed to explore other sources to provide such grants.

Support for disabled athletes

10. Some members expressed concern about the significant disparity between the amount of monthly subsidy provided to Elite A athletes (i.e. \$21,520 to \$32,500) and disabled Elite A athletes (i.e. \$5,400 on average) under the Elite Athletes Grants. These members urged the Administration to narrow the gap by enhancing financial support to disabled elite athletes, in particular those who were full-time employees and had to sacrifice their income for their sports training. While the Administration advised that the circumstances in the case of non-disabled athletes were materially different from those in the case of disabled athletes and there had always been two separate support schemes for these groups of athletes, it agreed to give further consideration to members' suggestion.

Redevelopment of HKSI

11. Some members queried the substantial increase in the project cost for the redevelopment of HKSI from \$1.3 billion to \$1.7 billion. The Administration explained that the rising cost was mainly attributable to the need for additional refurbishment and piling works following the detailed condition survey on the sports complex and site investigation, tender price escalation between 2006 and 2007, the anticipated inflation adjustment and provision for contingency cost. In response to members' concerns, the Administration assured members that it would take the opportunity to put in place more integrated sports facilities for athletes with disabilities, and the design of the lobby of the new multi-purpose building as well as the athletes' hostel would allow natural ventilation and maximum utilization of renewable energy. Efforts would also be made to enlarge the green areas along the riverside as far as possible.

12. The Administration further advised that despite the reduction in the area for the project as a result of the decision to allow the Hong Kong Jockey Club to retain the Equestrian stables, with the increased construction floor area and the proposed project scope, the redeveloped HKSI should be capable of meeting its elite training needs over a period of 10 to 15 years.

Management and operation of NSAs

13. A member opined that despite the availability of many high standard sports venues, the sports development in Hong Kong had been hindered by malpractices in the management of operation of NSAs. He further criticized that the remuneration

rate of senior management personnel of some major NSAs was unreasonably high, and there was a lack of transparency and accountability in the management and operation of NSAs, including the selection of athletes for participation in international sports competitions.

14. Upon the request of the Panel, the Administration provided an information paper on the enhanced mechanisms for monitoring government subvention to NSAs and the selection of athletes for participation in major games in March 2009 [LC Paper No. CB(2)1206/08-09(01)]. According to the Administration, the Subvention Agreement entered into between LCSD and NSAs had been revised since 2008-2009 to require, among others, the NSAs to provide the Government with the declarations of interests made by their office-bearers and staff, and the official records of management decisions for examination of compliance with their revised Code of Conduct and procurement guidelines. To strengthen the monitoring of their performance, LCSD would review the reports and financial statements of subvented programmes submitted by NSAs at regular intervals, conduct on-site inspections on the progress of the subvented programmes, and initiate quality assurance checks to ensure that proper accounting and internal control procedures were adopted by NSAs.

15. As regards the selection of athletes to compete in international sporting events, the Administration advised that it was the prerogative of SF&OC, which was the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Hong Kong, and the respective NSAs which were the national federation of individual sports in Hong Kong. According to the Olympic Charter, NOCs were responsible for deciding on the entry of athletes proposed by their respective national federations to the Olympic Games and the regional, continental or world multi-sports competition under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee. Selection should be based not only on the performance of an athlete but also on his ability to serve as an example to the sporting youth of his country.

Community Sports Development

16. In his reply to Hon Frederick FUNG's question on promoting sports for all raised at the Council meeting on 16 December 2009, SHA updated Members on the initiatives taken by the Administration in the development and promotion of community sports as follows -

- (a) to achieve the policy objective of providing "Sports for All", LCS D had commenced the first phase of public education work in June 2009 to promote the importance and benefits of regular exercise. The findings of the Consultancy Study on "Sports for All – the Participation Patterns of Hong Kong People in Physical Activities" (Consultancy Study) were introduced to the 18 District Councils, schools, local communities, and the business sector. The second phase of work to promote the community-wide participation in sports would start in April 2010. The Administration would conduct a comprehensive review of the existing community sports activities and public demand for sports facilities in the light of the findings of the Consultancy Study, and would design and provide more sports and physical activities suitable for people from different age groups in collaboration with NSAs;
- (b) in the coming five years, LCS D had planned to construct/provide in various districts additional facilities for jogging, swimming and badminton (i.e. the three kinds of sports that Hong Kong people participated in most frequently according to the findings of the Consultancy Study). These facilities included 14 additional jogging tracks, 11 new swimming facilities with indoor heated swimming pools, and 64 additional badminton courts;
- (c) to encourage members of the public or employees to participate more actively in sport, the "Free Use Scheme" had been implemented to allow schools, NSAs, district sports associations and subvented non-governmental organisations to apply for free use of various sports venues and facilities under LCS D management during non-peak hours. Priorities were also accorded to these organisations in reserving recreation and sports facilities in advance, and half-price concessionary rates were offered to members of the public for the use of swimming pools and land-based recreation and sports facilities at specific or off-peak hours; and
- (d) to promote public participation in sports, LCS D had organised major events and territory-wide programmes such as the Corporate Games and the Master Games, and diversified programmes for different target groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities and young people at risk. To promote sports culture in the community and strengthen

the public's sense of belonging to their own district, the biennial Hong Kong Games had been organised since 2007.

17. Issues relating to the development of community sports, in particular the shortage of community sports venues, were raised in conjunction with the discussions on sports development in Hong Kong at the meetings of the Panel held in April 2007, April 2008, May and October 2009.

18. Some members expressed concern about the inadequate supply of community sports venues during high-demand periods. Other members considered that the Administration should take active measures to cultivate the younger generation's interest in sports, and facilitate schools in utilising sports facilities of LCSD during non-busy hours. A member expressed dissatisfaction with the scattered distribution of sports facilities in Hong Kong, and suggested that the Administration should provide a large-scale sports village with all the necessary training facilities with a view to promoting sports development in Hong Kong. The member also cited the example of Tin Shui Wai, which was provided with only one 7-a-side hard surface soccer pitch despite its large population, to illustrate his concern about the unfair allocation of resources in the provision of community sports facilities. The Administration responded that it would expedite the delivery of leisure and cultural projects to meet the needs of the community in recreation facilities.

19. As regards members' concerns about the lack of progress made by the Administration in the promotion of local football, a popular sport amongst Hong Kong people, and the inadequate financial and venue support for the development of district football, the Administration undertook to revert to the Panel on the subject in March 2010 upon the completion of the consultancy study on the development of local football.

Promoting major sports events

20. During the discussion of sports development at the Panel meetings in April 2007 and October 2009, members considered that the Administration should devise a long-term plan for the development of sports into a significant asset of the community. The Administration responded that hosting of major sports events help enhance Hong Kong's image as Asia's sports event capital, and informed members about measures taken to promote major sports events in Hong Kong. These measures included the establishment of the "M" Mark System since 2004 to recognize and support major sports events organised by NSAs and other sports

organisations, such as the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, Hong Kong Cricket Sixes, the Hong Kong Golf Open Championship, with a view to instilling a sustainable sporting culture and bringing tangible economic benefits to the community; and the setting up of the Core Sponsor Group to provide a platform for commercial organisations to support major sports events held in Hong Kong.

Latest development

21. The Administration will brief members on its further initiatives to promote sports development at the meeting of the Panel on 8 January 2009.

Relevant papers

22. A list of relevant papers with their hyperlinks at the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 January 2010

Panel on Home Affairs

Relevant documents on promotion of sports development

Committee	Date of Meeting	Paper/Minutes/ Council question	LC Paper No.
Panel on Home Affairs	13.4.2007	Background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on sports development in Hong Kong	CB(2)1493/06-07(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0413cb2-1493-4-e.pdf
		The Administration's paper on sports development in Hong Kong	CB(2)1493/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0413cb2-1493-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)1980/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha070413.pdf
Panel on Home Affairs	11.5.2007	The Administration's paper on sports development in Hong Kong	CB(2)1493/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0413cb2-1493-1-e.pdf
		The Administration's paper on the redevelopment of the Hong Kong Sports Institute	CB(2)1493/06-07(02) (revised) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0413cb2-1493-2-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)250/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha070511.pdf

Committee	Date of Meeting	Paper/Minutes/ Council question	LC Paper No.
Panel on Home Affairs	11.4.2008	Background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the redevelopment of the Hong Kong Sports Institute	CB(2)1517/07-08(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0411cb2-1517-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2722/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha080411.pdf
Panel on Home Affairs	9.5.2008	Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2742/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha080509.pdf
Panel on Home Affairs	9.1.2009	Background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the proposed injection of funds into the Arts and Sport Development Fund	CB(2)580/08-09(07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0109cb2-580-7-e.pdf
	-	Supplementary information from the Administration on the monitoring mechanism for government subvention to national sports associations	CB(2)1206/08-09(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/hacb2-1206-1-e.pdf
Council meeting	25.11.2009	Hon Tanya CHAN raised a written question on the development of sports and the Administration's reply.	http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/chinese/conmtg/floor/cm1125-confirm-ec.pdf (pages 72-74)
	16.12.2009	Hon Frederick FUNG raised a written question on promoting sport for all and the Administration's reply.	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200912/16/P200912160115.htm