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(Attn: Ms Jasmine TAM)
(Fax Number: 2509 9055)

22 November 2011

Dear Ms Tam,

**Follow-up on the Meeting between Legislative Council Members
and Sha Tin District Council Members on 2 June 2011**

Thank you for your letter dated 19 October 2011 concerning the meeting between Legislative Council (LegCo) Members and Sha Tin District Council (STDC) Members on 2 June 2011, in which the leisure and cultural services (LCS) facilities in Sha Tin were discussed.

(a) LCS Facilities in Tai Wai

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has all along taken note of the population growth and the provision of LCS facilities in Sha Tin District. In addition to the planning of the "sports centre, community hall-cum-public library in Area 14B, Sha Tin" project, which has been accorded high priority for early implementation by the STDC, we are also planning for a number of works projects to enhance the provision of LCS facilities in the area. These include the "sports centre in Area 24D, Sha Tin" project on Sha Tin Tau Road, and two major district minor works projects involving the construction of sitting-out areas in Mei Tin Road and Chik Choi Lane respectively.

LCSD will take note of the development of Tai Wai and nearby areas, and carry on with the planning and construction of different projects with a view to providing suitable LCS facilities to local residents. In so doing, LCSD will consult the STDC and take into account the priorities accorded for each project, bearing in mind also key factors such as the growth of local population, provision and utilisation rates of existing LCS facilities in the district, and the standards laid down in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG).

(b) Provision of Heated Pool Facilities at the Ma On Shan Swimming Pool

As regards the STDC's proposed conversion of the existing outdoor swimming pools in Ma On Shan into heated pools, it should be noted that in his Report No. 42 issued in 2004, the Director of Audit has pointed out that the provision of outdoor heated pools is environmentally unfriendly because their heat dissipation is faster than that of indoor heated pools, resulting in higher electricity/fuel cost for heating up the water. In view of the high cost for converting outdoor swimming pools into indoor ones, the Director of Audit recommended that LCSD should critically examine the cost-effectiveness of the conversion works.

The retrofitting of covers and heated pool facilities at existing swimming pools will involve technical issues that may vary with the designs and constraints of individual swimming pools. For example, the existing structures of the swimming pools, the underground conditions of the sites and the latest statutory requirements will also have implications on the construction cost and programme. In addition, the swimming pools concerned will have to be closed when the conversion works are in progress. We must consider all relevant factors and implications of the works on the public before making a decision on whether to take forward the conversion works.

According to the HKPSG, two swimming pool complexes should be provided in Sha Tin District which has a population of about 630 000 (including a population of about 200 000 in Ma On Shan). At the moment, there are already three swimming pool complexes operating in the district, including the Sha Tin Jockey Club Swimming Pool which has a 50-metre outdoor heated main pool and the Hin Tin Swimming Pool which has a 50-metre indoor heated main pool.

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Given Sha Tin District already has one outdoor heated pool and one indoor heated pool which have utilisation rate of about 20% and 40% in winter respectively, there is substantial spare capacity to accommodate more Sha Tin residents to go swimming in winter. As such, we do not have any plan to retrofit a cover and heated pool facilities at the Ma On Shan Swimming Pool at present. We will continue to take note of the views of the STDC on works projects of other LCS facilities in the district.

Yours sincerely,



(Benjamin MOK)
for Secretary for Home Affairs

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