

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)203/13-14(06)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 8 November 2013

Management and maintenance of the Hong Kong Stadium Turf Pitch

Redeveloped from the old Government Stadium, the existing Hong Kong Stadium ("HKS") was commissioned in 1994. With a maximum seating capacity of 40 000, HKS has been a major venue for staging large-scale international sports events in HK, including the annual Rugby Sevens and international football matches.

2. Five international football matches, including the International Football Friendly Match between Kitchee and Manchester United ("MU") sponsored by the Mega Events Fund, were held at HKS between 24 and 29 July 2013. The media reports about a participating English Premium League football player getting injured at one of the matches held and MU having to call off an open training session owing to the poor condition of the HKS turf pitch aroused public concern about the quality and management of the HKS turf pitch. Following the conclusion of the five matches on 29 July 2013, HKS turf pitch was temporary closed for immediate repair and maintenance and was reopened on 21 September 2013. A copy of the press release issued by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") on 20 September 2013 on the re-opening of HKS turf pitch is in the **Appendix**.

3. In the light of public concern, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services ("DLCS") announced on 30 July 2013 that LCSD would undertake a comprehensive review of the turf maintenance and management issues of HKS and formulate measures to be taken in the short, medium and long term to address the issues identified. The review would focus on ways to enhance the performance and resilience of the turf pitch, strike a better balance between quality and usage, and enhance the capacity and emergency response system of HKS. An Expert Group on the Hong Kong Stadium Turf Pitch, chaired by DLCS and comprising experts in turf

management from Hong Kong and the Mainland as well as major stakeholders of HKS, was formed in late August 2013 to advise LCSD on the necessary medium and long-term improvement measures for the HKS turf pitch. According to the Administration, LCSD would make reference to the recommendations to be made by the expert group in enhancing the turf maintenance and management practices for HKS.

4. The subject of the management and maintenance of the HKS turf pitch has not been discussed at any committees of LegCo. Nevertheless, in their letters issued in late July 2013 and addressed either to the Secretary for Home Affairs ("SHA") or to the Chairman of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel"), Hon MA Fung-kwok, Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon WONG Yuk-man (a non-Panel member) expressed similar concerns over the quality of the HKS turf pitch and the performance of LCSD in the maintenance and management of the pitch. The Panel was requested to discuss the matter at a meeting.

5. On 20 August 2013, the Administration replied to the letters of six Members (including the above four Panel and non-Panel members) who had respectively written to SHA on issues relating to the HKS turf pitch. The Administration's replies to the six Members concerned have been circulated to members vide CB(2)1730/12-13(01) to (06).

6. The Administration will brief the Panel on the follow-up actions for improving the condition of the HKS turf pitch at the meeting on 8 November 2013.

Appendix

Press Releases

Hong Kong Stadium turf pitch reopens for use (with photos)

Repair work of the turf pitch of the Hong Kong Stadium is in good progress and it is now ready for use for the 2013-14 football season.

After 53 days of intensive caring and repair work, the turf pitch of the stadium will be reopened tomorrow (September 21) to host the local match of the First Division League between South China and Kitchee.

A spokesman for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) said today (September 20) that the stadium management had implemented a special priority maintenance programme on the stadium during its closure in order to meet the very tight maintenance schedule.

"To shorten the time for turf establishment, we have transplanted the thick turf sods cutting out from the peripheral turf areas to replace the more seriously damaged areas in the central areas of the playing field.

"For the less damaged areas, we have adopted more frequent and enhanced cultural practices such as mowing, fertilising and aeration to stimulate turf spreading," he said.

"Regarding the peripheral areas, where thick turf sods were removed for transplant purpose, we have replenished the bare areas by laying of newly procured sods together with seed sowing. The newly replenished turf may turn yellow in colour in the initial few weeks due to a changing in growing environment from its original location. This is a normal phenomenon. The turf will gradually grow back to its green colour after its roots have established well into the soil of the new environment. The replenished turf will be a source of supplying sods for transplanting purpose for maintaining the stadium turf in the future," the spokesman added.

The spokesman said the Hong Kong Football Association had inspected the turf pitch condition of the Hong Kong Stadium on September 17 and confirmed that the playing field was up to the standard for hosting First Division soccer matches.

The Hong Kong Stadium turf pitch was temporary closed since July 30 for immediate repair and maintenance following the International Football Friendly Match between Kitchee and Manchester United.

To address the maintenance and management issues, the LCSD is conducting a comprehensive review on the stadium turf pitch with a view to formulating short, medium and long term improvement measures.

An Expert Group on the Hong Kong Stadium Turf Pitch was formed in late August to advise LCSD on the necessary medium and long-term improvement measures.

The LCSD will make reference to the recommendations on medium and long-term measures to be made by the expert group in

enhancing the turf maintenance and management practices for the stadium.

Ends/Friday, September 20, 2013
Issued at HKT 11:22

NNNN