

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 17 November 2014

Enhancement of museum services

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Administration's measures for enhancing museum services including the renewal of exhibitions in public museums, and summarizes major concerns of members of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on the subject.

Background

2. When the Panel discussed the future development of museum services at the meeting on 5 February 2010, members noted the Administration's decision that public museums would continue to be managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"), instead of establishing a statutory Museums Board as recommended by the Committee on Museums¹ ("CoM"). Members also noted that the Administration had implemented improvement measures to enhance the operation and services of public museums with reference to CoM's

¹ The Administration established CoM in November 2004 to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on the management and provision of public museum services in Hong Kong. The Panel was briefed on CoM's Recommendation Report at the meeting on 8 June 2007 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2042/06-07(05)).

recommendations. At present, LCSD manages 14 museums² and five other cultural venues³ that provide museum services.

3. When the Panel discussed measures to enhance museum services at the meeting on 22 March 2013, members noted that since 2010, LCSD had set new directions for museum development with the aim of delivering museum services with greater transparency, accountability, efficiency and creativity so as to meet the rising aspirations of the community. Members were also briefed on the Administration's plans to enhance museum services as follows -

- (a) to continue to organize blockbuster exhibitions so as to boost museum attendance for audience building;
- (b) to promote local art, including establishing a new visual arts exhibition and activity centre at the former Royal Yacht Club at Oil Street, providing an Art Square in Salisbury Garden at Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront, and presenting a signature programme "Hong Kong Contemporary Art Awards Exhibition" in the Hong Kong Museum of Art;
- (c) to renew permanent exhibitions by phases, including - (i) renewal and reopening of the Astronomy and Space Science Halls of the Hong Kong Space Museum in 2015; (ii) opening of the Biodiversity Gallery and Children Gallery in the Hong Kong Science Museum in 2015 and 2016 respectively; (iii) revamping of the permanent exhibition in the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence; (iv) setting up of the Palaeontology Gallery and the Earth Science Hall in the Hong Kong Science Museum; (v) planning for renovation of the Hong Kong Museum of Art; and (vi) in the long term, building a central repository to cater for the growth of its collections; and
- (d) to build the brand outside Hong Kong by capitalizing on every opportunity to promote the museums and artists as well as the culture of Hong Kong overseas.

² The 14 museums include seven major museums (namely Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Science Museum, Hong Kong Space Museum, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong Museum of History, Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence, and Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum) and seven smaller museums (namely Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum, Law Uk Folk Museum, Sheung Yiu Folk Museum, Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum, and Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery). More information is available from the public museum portal at http://www.museums.gov.hk/en_US/web/portal/about-us.html

³ The five cultural venues are Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre, the Hong Kong Film Archive, the Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre and the Oil Street Art Space.

4. Members were briefed on the Administration's proposed expansion and renovation of the Hong Kong Museum of Art at the Panel meeting on 12 May 2014. The proposed project will be submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration in the 2014-2015 session.

Members' concerns

5. Major concerns of members on the subject expressed at the Panel meetings in February 2010, March 2013 and May 2014 are summarized below.

Governance of public museums

6. When discussing the future development of museum services in February 2010, members had no strong view on the Administration's decision of not taking forward MoC's recommendation of establishing a statutory Museums Board. Nevertheless, members urged the Administration to introduce measures to enhance the accountability and transparency of public museums, and foster closer partnership and community participation in their operation and management. There was another view that the Administration should endeavour to promote an environment conducive to the healthy competition among different types of museums and to provide room for the organic growth of museums with a variety of missions, themes and characteristics.

7. According to the Administration, it had implemented an array of initiatives for enhancing professional and community participation in public museum services, including (a) the setting up of a Panel of Museum Advisors for each of the three streams of museums (viz. arts, history and science) to advise LCSD on the strategies for the development, promotion and management of public museums; (b) the continued engagement of guest curators to curate museum programmes; and (c) the organization of exhibitions and programmes to showcase the works of local artists to local and overseas audience.

Enhancement of museum services

8. When discussing measures to enhance museum services in March 2013, members urged the Administration to adopt a more dynamic approach in promoting museum exhibitions and activities for audience building. There was a view that LCSD museums should utilize advanced multimedia technology and enhance its online services so as to facilitate users in their access to and searching of information about museum collections and exhibitions. There was another view that the Administration should emphasize both the publicity and marketing efforts as well as the curation and presentation of quality

exhibition programmes. Concern was also raised as to whether sufficient resources had been provided in sustaining young people's interest in history and heritage. The Administration was urged to organize more exhibitions on Chinese history and Chinese traditional culture.

9. The Administration advised that the blockbuster exhibitions organized by LCSD in the past few years had enhanced the image of its flagship museums and the attractiveness of exhibitions to non-visitors, with a record breaking attendance of 5.8 million visitors in 2012. About 27% of these museum visitors were youths aged between eight and 19. The Administration undertook to continue to step up its promotion efforts targeting the youth to further expand the audience base, promote patronage and sustain community interest in visiting museums. Furthermore, LCSD was in the process of developing online or digital museum collections in order to develop a wider patronage. Resources had been allocated for the purpose of launching a museum portal carrying multi-media content and revamping individual museum websites.

Renewing permanent exhibitions and management of collection items

10. Noting that the Administration would take steps to renew the permanent exhibitions of its museums by phases, members urged the Administration to expedite the renewal exercises and to ensure that there would be sufficient space for display of the museum collections. There was a view that the Administration should take the opportunity to re-align the duplicated collections at different museums.

11. The Administration advised that it would strive to expedite the renewal exercises as far as practicable. As regards the shortage of space for museum collections, LCSD was actively pursuing the proposal of constructing a central repository as a long-term solution. The Administration also ensured members that it would realign the museum collections so as to avoid replicating the exhibit items at different museums.

Latest development

12. The Administration will brief members on the enhancement of programming, audience building, and renewal of permanent exhibitions of public museums at the meeting on 17 November 2014.

Relevant papers

13. A list of relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
13 November 2014

**Relevant papers on
Enhancement of museum services**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	5.2.2010 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	22.3.2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	12.5.2014 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes

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