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**Panel on Home Affairs**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 10 April 2015**

**Education and career development support for Hong Kong's elite athletes**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on issues relating to education and career development support for Hong Kong's elite athletes, and summarizes the main views and concerns of members of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on the subject.

**Background**

2. According to the Administration, its strategic policy for developing sport in Hong Kong is threefold, namely to promote sport in the community, to support elite sport, and to make Hong Kong a centre for major international sports events. The Elite Sports Committee under the Sports Commission<sup>1</sup> ("SC") is tasked with advising the Administration<sup>2</sup> through SC on matters pertaining to elite sport, providing policy direction to the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI") and advising on funding priorities for supporting elite sport and athletes.

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<sup>1</sup> SC, established in January 2005 and chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs, is responsible for advising the Administration on matters pertaining to sports development. There are three Committees under SC, namely the Community Sports Committee, the Elite Sports Committee and the Major Sports Events Committee, which advise on measures to develop and promote sport in the community, elite sport and major sports events in Hong Kong respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for formulating and coordinating policy for developing sport in Hong Kong. It also co-ordinates the strategic planning of sports and recreational facilities. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is responsible for promoting sport in the community and administering funding support for relevant organizations under the established sports policy.

3. HKSI is responsible for delivering services to support Hong Kong's top athletes<sup>3</sup> and works in close collaboration with the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China ("SF&OC") and the national sports associations ("NSAs"). HKSI commenced a major redevelopment project in March 2009<sup>4</sup> to upgrade its training facilities for elite athletes of Hong Kong. The main facilities were scheduled for completion by the end of 2013. In order for HKSI to, among other things, strengthen support services to athletes and launch new services to better prepare athletes for a second career after retirement from high-level competition, the Administration injected \$7 billion for establishing the Elite Athletes Development Fund<sup>5</sup> in 2011-2012 to provide funding for HKSI.

#### Support on education and career planning for elite athletes

4. The Panel was advised by the Administration at its meetings in 2011 and 2012 that the Administration's education and career support measures for serving and retired elite athletes included the following -

- (a) the Education Bureau ("EDB") encouraged secondary schools to arrange a flexible timetable of study and offer tailor-made support measures for student athletes, and allowed student athletes representing Hong Kong to request special consideration when international competitions clashed with public examinations;
- (b) under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System, the Sub-System for School Principal's Nominations and a Self Recommendation Scheme gave due recognition to students who had achieved outstanding results in "non-academic" areas such as sport. The University Grants Committee-funded ("UGC-funded") tertiary institutions also accepted athletes nominated for admission by SF&OC and HKSI;
- (c) tertiary institutions made flexible arrangements for student athletes to train and take part in competitions taking into account their individual circumstances, and might offer them dedicated personnel

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<sup>3</sup> HKSI was re-constituted in October 2004 to become an incorporated body to undertake matters pertaining to elite athlete training formerly under the auspices of the Hong Kong Sports Development Board, which was dissolved following the passage of the Hong Kong Sports Development Board (Repeal) Bill by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") at its meeting of 9 June 2004.

<sup>4</sup> The proposal "Redevelopment of the Hong Kong Sports Institute" (PWSC(2008-09)13) at an estimated cost of \$1 707.5 million in money-of-the-day prices was approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") on 2 June 2008.

<sup>5</sup> The proposal "Injection into the Elite Athletes Development Fund" (FCR(2011-12)42) was approved by FC on 18 July 2011.

and designated financial assistance schemes;

- (d) HKSI catered to the different needs of athletes during and after their sporting career, including (i) providing grants to individual athletes for academic courses and programmes offered by local and overseas educational institutions through the Hong Kong Athletes Fund ("HKAF"); (ii) providing education and career planning services to athletes through various programmes; and (iii) offering a five-year part-time "Bachelor of Education in Sports Training" programme jointly with the Beijing Sport University for Hong Kong's athletes; and
- (e) SF&OC addressed the needs of athletes who had retired or would soon retire from high-level competition through the Hong Kong Athletes Career & Education Programme ("HKACEP"), which (i) offered grants to athletes to enrol in English and other language courses; (ii) provided scholarship programmes for athletes to enrol in academic courses and programmes offered by educational institutions; and (iii) provided programmes for retired athletes and those who were about to retire to help them plan for a "second career" (e.g. seminars, workshops, consultation services and placement schemes).

### **Members' concerns**

5. Members' main views and concerns on education and career development support for elite athletes expressed at various Panel meetings since 2011 are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Education support for elite athletes

6. Members had stressed time and again that it was incumbent on the Administration to provide effective and coordinated support to elite athletes. They urged the Administration to put in place a flexible education system, which was considered conducive to the development of elite athletes with reference to overseas experience. In addition to tertiary institutions, primary and secondary schools should allow flexibility for elite student athletes to pursue their studies while taking part in training or competitions. The Administration was also urged to provide additional financial support to schools to nurture elite student athletes.

7. The Administration advised that the existing education system had allowed flexibility for students to extend their years of study. Schools were

encouraged to make arrangements for high-level student athletes to attend make-up classes, defer studies or apply for leave to take part in training and competitions. There were also tailor-made training programmes offered by schools themselves or in collaboration with other institutions for student athletes to help them strike a balance between study and sports career.

#### Career development for elite athletes

8. Members generally took the view that uncertain prospect for elite athletes after retirement had deterred parents from encouraging their children to pursue a career in sports. The Administration was urged to provide more opportunities for retired athletes to pursue further education in local tertiary institutions or consider providing subsidies for them to study abroad. There was also a view that the Administration should nominate eligible student athletes to study at overseas universities if no suitable programmes were available at local universities.

9. The Administration advised that HKSI was studying the feasibility of developing in-house education programmes for student athletes to better cater for their education and training needs. While local tertiary institutions had the autonomy to admit students and the enrolment requirements for individual programmes offered by different institutions might vary, UGC-funded institutions had accepted admission applications from elite athletes recommended by HKSI or SF&OC. HKAF also provided grants to individual elite athletes to pursue their studies at approved overseas colleges or universities if no comparable courses were offered in Hong Kong.

10. In response to members' concern about career development support for elite athletes, the Administration advised that SF&OC had established HKACEP in collaboration with the business sector, with a view to improving the education and career prospects for serving and retired athletes. HKSI had adopted a whole-person approach to athletes' development and provided various programmes to assist elite athletes' in pursuing further studies in preparation for the transition to a second career.

#### Support for non-elite athletes and disabled elite athletes

11. Members considered that the education need and career prospects of non-elite athletes should not be neglected having regard to their contribution to the sport development in Hong Kong, and assistance should also be made available to both elite and non-elite athletes in need. Members had also raised concern about the disparity in the amount of monthly subsidy provided by HKSI to able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes.

12. According to the Administration, individual athletes in non-elite sports who had potential or achieved good results could receive support from HKSI and their NSAs. The monthly financial assistance to elite athletes was performance-based. The Administration stressed that the Government's sport policy had not targeted at elite sports but also covered the development of non-elite sports such as football. Assistance on education and career support would be made available to both elite and non-elite athletes in need. The disparity in the amount of subsidy received by able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes was largely attributed to the different historical background under which the respective financial assistance schemes were drawn up. The Administration had reviewed and adjusted the financial assistance to disabled athletes in 2009 and would do so again when appropriate.

### **Recent developments**

13. At the Council meeting of 19 March 2014, Members passed a motion on "Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy on 'promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports and developing Hong Kong into a prime destination for hosting major international sports events' and formulating a long-term sports policy" moved by Mr MA Fung-kuok and amended by Dr Kenneth CHAN, Dr Helena WONG and Dr Fernando CHEUNG urging the Government to expeditiously review and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy on, inter alia, supporting elite sports. The wording of the motion and the Administration's progress report on the motion are in **Appendix I**.

14. According to the Administration's reply to a question raised by Mr Frankie YICK at the Council meeting of 30 April 2014, the number of beneficiaries of various education and career development support programmes for Hong Kong's elite athletes was as follows -

- (a) a total of 34 athletes received grants amounting to around \$3.5 million from HKAF for further studies in the three financial years between 2011-2012 and 2013-2014;
- (b) a total of 1 257 elite athletes, among whom 144 had plans to retire, participated in the "Athletes Integrated Educational and Vocational Development Programme" organized by HKSI in the five years before March 2014,; and
- (c) there were around 3 000 counts of athletes using the HKACEP services since the implementation of HKACEP offered by SF&OC from September 2008 to the end of March 2014.

15. Members were advised by the Administration at the Policy briefing cum Panel meeting in February 2015 that HKSI and the Hong Kong Institute of Education ("HKIED") signed in April 2014 a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the establishment of a dedicated mechanism for HKIED to admit HKSI athletes and coaches to bachelor degree courses. In June 2014, HKSI launched the "HKSI Elite Athlete-friendly School Network", in cooperation with over 20 secondary schools, with a view to providing more support for student athletes. Starting from 2015, upon their retirement from training and competition, eligible full-time athletes would be granted a one-off award under the new Elite Athletes Performance Recognition Scheme launched by HKSI, which would help them to pursue new careers either in sport or in other fields.

16. The Administration will brief the Panel on the latest development regarding the provision of education and career development support for elite athletes at the meeting on 10 April 2015.

### **Relevant papers**

17. A list of the relevant papers on LegCo's website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
2 April 2015

**Progress Report on the Motion on  
“Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy on  
‘promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports  
and developing Hong Kong into a prime destination  
for hosting major international sports events’  
and formulating a long-term sports policy”**

**Purpose**

At the Legislative Council Meeting held on 19 March 2014, the above motion moved by Hon MA Fung-kuok as amended by Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN, Dr Hon Helena WONG and Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG was passed. The wording of the motion is at the **Annex**. This report briefs Members on follow-up action taken by the Administration in regard to the motion.

**Sports Policy and Structure**

*Promotion of sport*

2. Our policy is to promote sport in Hong Kong by fostering a strong sporting culture in the community, providing support to our elite athletes so that they can perform to their full potential at major international sporting events, and raising the city’s profile as a centre for international sports events. In consultation with members of the sports community and other stakeholders, we will continue to review and modify as appropriate specific initiatives aimed at helping us to achieve our policy objectives.

*Administration of sports organisations*

3. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) monitors the use of public funds by “national sports associations” (NSAs) through subvention agreements signed with the NSAs that aim to ensure that the subventions are used in an accountable manner, and that planned

programmes are implemented in accordance with the requirements of the agreements.

4. To enhance the transparency in the way that the NSAs operate, the LCSD requires them to upload their Memorandum and Articles of Association; information on their mechanisms for selection of athletes (including appeal mechanisms); and a summary of subvented expenditure as shown in their latest annual audited reports to their official websites. LCSD has introduced a computerised system to strengthen the administration of the Sports Subvention Scheme, to improve monitoring of NSAs' compliance, and to facilitate the timely submission of reports by NSAs. LCSD is training NSAs' staff on the proper procedures and best practices and will continue to help NSAs improve their internal controls and governance.

5. We will continue to work with sports organisations to increase transparency and accountability in the use of public funding.

#### *Sports-related studies*

6. In collaboration with academic institutions, LCSD conducts consultancy studies and opinion surveys to track Hong Kong people's physical fitness, their preferences and participation patterns in sport and other physical activities, and their feedback on the leisure services provided to the community. The Department plans to conduct a "Sport for All" study in 2016.

#### *Handling of complaints against NSAs*

7. All participants in Olympic events, including those organised by the Olympic Council of Asia are required to obtain recognition from the International Olympic Committee and comply with the Olympic Charter. One of the fundamental principles of the charter is that the organisation, administration and operation of sport should be governed by an independent sports organisation, which has the responsibility to protect its autonomy from any effects which may render its strict compliance with the charter provisions impossible.



8. The subvention agreements between LCSD and NSAs contain provisions requiring the NSAs to explain and provide feedback on any complaint upon request. LCSD will take follow-up action on individual cases whenever necessary.

## **Sports Facilities**

### *Sports facilities*

9. We will continue to plan and develop high-quality sports facilities to meet the needs of the public, having regard to the planning standards and local demand. In 2014, LCSD plans to seek funding approval of over \$1.8 billion from the Legislative Council to build sports centres in Area 24D in Sha Tin and Area 14 in Tuen Mun. New projects already under construction include sports centres in Sha Tin, Tseung Kwan O, Tsing Yi and Yuen Long.

10. It is the Government's established policy not only to comply with the prevailing requirements, but where practicable to achieve standards beyond the statutory requirements in the provision of barrier-free facilities to ensure that people with disabilities can comfortably use public sports facilities. For existing recreation and sports facilities, LCSD is working with the Architectural Services Department to upgrade barrier-free facilities to the latest design standards where practicable whenever renovation works are carried out.

### *Kai Tak Multi-purpose Sports Complex (MPSC)*

11. We regularly contact stakeholders from the sports sector and other interested groups to seek their views and provide them with up-to-date information on the planning of the MPSC. Relevant documents are available on a dedicated website for public information. We plan to appoint a consultant to provide expert advice on the operating specifications for the MPSC, and we aim seek funding approval from the Legislative Council for the pre-construction works within 2014.

## **Public Participation in Sport**

### *Sport for all*

12. To encourage people of all age groups and with different levels of ability to pursue an active and healthy lifestyle, LCSD organises a wide range of sports activities for various target groups, such as, the elderly, low income families, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Since 2008, LCSD has organised the annual “Sport for All Day” on a Sunday in August, on which sports programmes are offered free-of-charge throughout Hong Kong, and most fee-charging leisure facilities are open to the public for free use. Participation in the “Sport for All Day 2013” exceeded 220,000 people.

13. In 2014-15, LCSD plans to organise some 6 000 free programmes for the elderly, low income families and people with disabilities with the total estimated expenditure of \$13.67 million. As well as organising such programmes, LCSD also offers concessionary rates to people from less advantaged backgrounds to encourage their participation in sport.

### *School sports*

14. LCSD will continue to run the School Sports Programme with the aim of encouraging students to take part in regular sports training and competitions. In addition to providing health and social benefits for students, this also allows NSAs to identify students with the potential to perform at a higher level and give them the opportunity to take part in advanced training programmes.

15. In 2013-14, we launched the Pilot Scheme for Student Athlete Support in partnership with the Hong Kong School Sports Federation, to provide additional support to student athletes from low income backgrounds. Under the scheme, schools can apply for funding to pay for personal sports equipment, transportation costs and school squad coaching fees for individual students. A total of 363 schools have initially joined the scheme, and we have earmarked \$3.63 million to support the scheme in the 2013-14 school year.

## **Hosting of Major Sports Events**

16. To help us achieve the policy objective of developing Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, we facilitate the organisation of such events by local sports bodies through the award of grants and other forms of support under the “M” Mark System. We regularly review the level of grants for “M” Mark events, with a view to ensuring that Hong Kong can host such events to a high standard and also ensure that the events are well promoted to local spectators and to visitors to the city.

## **Support for Athletes**

17. We will continue to support the training and related needs of our elite athletes through the allocation of funding to the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) from the Elite Athletes Development Fund, commensurate with the increased running costs and levels of support services available to athletes upon the substantive completion of the \$1.8 billion redevelopment of the HKSI in 2013. In this regard, we have earmarked \$376.1 million for allocation to the HKSI in 2014-15.

### *Education and career development*

18. The HKSI offers support for elite athletes’ academic education and future career development through its “Elite Athletes Lifestyle Support Programme”. The Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China also provides additional support to serving and retired athletes through its “Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme”.

19. In June 2014, the HKSI launched the Elite Athlete-friendly School Network which creates a partnership between the institute and secondary schools to provide a curriculum that caters specifically for the training and competition needs of student athletes. The HKSI plans to seek professional accreditation of the elite training programme from an

educational perspective, and is also working with tertiary institutions to provide more flexibility and better support for elite student athletes undertaking post-secondary study.

*Support for athletes with disabilities*

20. We work with the sports associations for disabled athletes to ensure that we can provide the support that athletes with disabilities need to develop their sporting potential. We will allocate funding to support our disabled athletes' preparation for and participation in the 2014 Asian Para Games, and in addition we have granted about \$1.45 million to the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled to support the "Striving for Excellence Programme", which aims to help athletes achieve good results at the Games.

**Home Affairs Bureau**

**June 2014**

(Translation)

**Motion on**  
**“Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy on**  
**‘promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports and**  
**developing Hong Kong into a prime destination for hosting major**  
**international sports events’ and formulating a long-term sports policy”**  
**moved by Hon MA Fung-kwok**  
**at the Council meeting of 19 March 2014**

**Motion as amended by Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN, Dr Hon Helena WONG**  
**and Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG**

That Hong Kong has all along lacked a long-term and comprehensive sports policy; as the Government has not conducted any reviews of the sports policy since the publication of the Report of the Sports Policy Review Team in 2002, this Council urges the Government to expeditiously review and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy on ‘promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports and developing Hong Kong into a prime destination for hosting major international sports events’, and deepen and step up the promotion of local sports affairs to dovetail with social needs, thereby achieving the important functions of sports to train the body and the mind, give full play to individual potential and strengthen cohesion in society, etc.; the relevant proposals include:

Sports policy and structure —

- (1) to formulate a long-term sports policy, increase resources and establish a sports commissioner to oversee and co-ordinate various government departments to promote sports development;
- (2) to review the overall management structure and system, and perfect activity organization and the mechanism for resource deployment and co-ordination among the Government, sports organizations and institutions, so as to enhance operational efficiency and transparency, and strengthen the nurturing of sports administrative and management personnel;
- (3) to encourage academic institutions and community organizations to conduct sports-related studies, so as to provide data and theoretical bases and increase efficiency of the sports policy;

- (4) to develop sports-related industries, including training, supply of sports goods and equipment, venue operation and management, media promotion, insurance and sports medicine, etc., for providing athletes and young people with diversified career pathways, and through tax concessions and other financial incentives, encourage the business sector to sponsor sports activities;
- (5) to review the governance, funding mechanism and operation of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and various national sports associations, so as to enhance their governance level and operation transparency, and use the governance level, fairness of funding distribution and operation transparency of the various national sports associations as the criteria for continued funding and determining funding levels;
- (6) to set up an independent mechanism for handling complaints targeted at the various national sports associations or disputes involving the various national sports associations;

#### Sports venues and facilities —

- (7) to increase easily accessible sports venues, enhance the standard and management of existing facilities, and effectively deploy venue resources, so as to meet the needs of the industry, schools and the public;
- (8) to enhance transparency and sustainability in the planning for the Multi-purpose Sports Complex at Kai Tak, including establishing a clear consultation mechanism, providing venue support for more sports items, adopting a ‘sports come first’ operational mode to support diversified and sustained development of sports, and designing venue in a flexible manner, so as to support elite sports and sports for all and meet the needs of major competitions, the industry and the public;
- (9) to review the existing policies on land and industrial buildings, so as to release space for more private organizations to develop sports venues;

#### Public participation in sports —

- (10) to strengthen the support in sports for schools, including establishing dedicated funding for sports, strengthening training for sports

teachers and cultivating students' interests in sports, so as to manifest the spirit of 'one sports/arts in life', and to encourage schools to open their sports venues to sports organizations outside school hours;

- (11) to deepen the support for specific population groups (such as the elderly, poor people, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities, etc.), so that they have more opportunities to participate in sports;
- (12) to further develop inter-district sports competitions, so as to enhance the sports atmosphere in districts and strengthen cohesion in the community;
- (13) to strive to host more mega sports events and cross-boundary games, so as to raise people's interest of participation and drive the development of sports tourism;
- (14) to strengthen the publicity of various sports to enhance people's understanding of the relevant sports, thereby enhancing their interest and ability in sports appreciation;
- (15) to allocate additional resources to private sports institutions other than the various national sports associations for subsidizing their organization of sports activities;
- (16) to establish an inter-departmental mechanism under the co-ordination of the Home Affairs Bureau to assist schools, non-governmental organizations and sports clubs in borrowing sports venues and facilities;

#### Support for athletes —

- (17) to further expand the coverage of elite sports, introduce development plans for non-elite sports, strengthen sports support for persons with disabilities, and enhance the overall standard of sports training and level of athletic skills in Hong Kong;
- (18) to raise the professional and social status of athletes, and strengthen the support for current and retired athletes in respect of present education, further studies, employment and post-retirement prospects, so as to encourage more young people with potentials to join the ranks of full-time athletes; and
- (19) to review the incentive award system for disabled athletes who win awards in major international competitions, so as to bring the levels

of incentive awards for them on a par with those for able-bodied athletes;

Sports policy and structure —

- (20) to strengthen the monitoring of the administrative and financial structure of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and various national sports associations; and

Support for athletes —

- (21) to arrange for professionals to accompany and offer support to athletes participating in international competitions;

Sports venues and facilities —

- (22) to provide a barrier-free environment to facilitate persons with disabilities and the public to participate in sports; and

Support for athletes —

- (23) to accord the same treatment to disabled and non-disabled elite athletes, so that disabled elite athletes may participate in sports on a full-time basis.



**Relevant papers on  
Education and career development support for elite athletes**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Home Affairs	14.7.2003 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	13.4.2007 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	8.1.2010 (Items V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	14.1.2011 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Education	13.5.2011 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Home Affairs	13.5.2011 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	15.11.2011 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	14.12.2012 (Item VII)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	30.4.2014	<a href="#">Official Records of Proceedings Pages 10205 to 10209 (written question raised by Hon Frankie YICK on "Assistance for Retiring and Retired Athletes")</a>
Panel on Home Affairs	6.2.2015 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>