

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)228/15-16(04)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 November 2015**

Provision of arts space

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Government's efforts to develop arts space. It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the provision of arts space.

Background

2. In the Election Manifesto, the Chief Executive pledged that the Government would strengthen support, in particular to young artists and new arts groups, to provide more room for arts development and make available additional resources. Having regard to the demand for arts space by the arts community, the Government has provided additional resources for the Hong Kong Arts Development Council ("HKADC") since 2012-2013 to develop arts space for renting to artists or art groups at a concessionary rate for use as offices, workshops or rehearsal venues. With the support of the Government, HKADC implemented the first arts space scheme at an industrial building in Wong Chuk Hang, providing units of different sizes for renting at a concessionary rate to local artists starting from mid-2014.

3. As set out in the 2015 Policy Address, the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") is also supporting the collaboration between the Tai Po District Council and HKADC to convert a vacant school building in Tai Po into an arts development centre for performing artists and arts groups. In addition, the Government is exploring the feasibility of reserving a certain portion of floor area in the future development of a site in Aberdeen to provide space for HKADC to support arts development.

Major views and concerns expressed by LegCo Members

Enhancing provision of arts space

4. When the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") was briefed on the policy initiatives of HAB in the 2015 Policy Address at its meeting on 6 February 2015, some members enquired whether the Administration had identified more vacant premises for conversion into arts development centres besides the project in Tai Po. The Administration advised that HAB supported the collaboration between the Tai Po District Council and HKADC to convert a vacant school building in Tai Po into an arts development centre in order to provide space for performing artists and arts groups for arts creation, rehearsals and arts promotion activities. Funding approval was planned to be sought from the Finance Committee ("FC") in 2015-2016 for the relevant works. The Administration and HKADC would continue to explore other possible opportunities to provide more arts space to support the development of local arts groups and artists. Meanwhile, both sides were exploring the feasibility of reserving a certain portion of floor area in the future development of a site in Aberdeen to provide space for HKADC to support arts development.

Implementing the first arts space scheme in Wong Chuk Hang

5. At the special FC meeting held on 31 March 2015 to examine the estimates of expenditure for the 2015-2016 financial year, some Members enquired how the arts space scheme implemented by HKADC in Wong Chuk Hang was utilized to provide arts space to artists at a concessionary rent and how the scheme had been received by the arts sector.

6. The Administration informed Members that the Government had provided \$8.72 million to HKADC for implementing the project to provide arts space to artists at a building in Wong Chuk Hang at a concessionary rent. The total area of the arts space in this project is 10 254 square feet. It is partitioned into 17 arts studios each ranging in size from 300 to 1 400 square feet. All the arts studios had been leased to artists (involving a total of 27 visual/media artists) at a concessionary rent. Emerging artists who had graduated from arts-related programmes for no more than three years might receive further rental subsidies. HKADC had formed a panel to assess the 76 applications received for the first term of tenancy from 2014 to 2016. According to the Administration, HKADC had received positive feedback from the artist tenants who considered that the scheme facilitated their arts creation work and helped establish network with other arts practitioners.

Latest development

7. The Administration will consult the Panel on the development of arts space and a permanent office of HKADC at the ex-Aberdeen Fire Station site at the next meeting on 13 November 2015.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 November 2015

Appendix

Relevant papers on the provision of arts space

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	6.2.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Finance Committee	31.3.2015	Administration's replies to Members' questions in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016 Pages 215-216, 794 and 951

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