

For discussion

14 June 2016

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

**Use of Public Open Space Managed by
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the use and management of public open space managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the upcoming public art programmes and the progress of the Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront Revitalisation Plan.

Background

2. The LCSD develops and manages a wide range of public cultural, recreational and sports facilities for the enjoyment of members of the public. As far as public open space is concerned, the department manages over 1 500 parks and playgrounds of varying sizes providing leisure and recreational facilities such as gardens, walking and jogging trails, children's playgrounds, sitting-out areas, football pitches, basketball courts and fitness equipment, for the purposes of promoting a healthy lifestyle and sport for all. The LCSD manages the venues in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap.132) and its subsidiary regulation to ensure that activities in the pleasure grounds are conducted in a safe and orderly manner.

Facilities in Public Open Space

3. The LCSD is committed to providing beautiful and comfortable leisure environments and a variety of public pleasure grounds for the enjoyment of the public so as to meet their diverse leisure and recreational needs. Furthermore, the LCSD has made active efforts to increase the following facilities in recent years to address the demand of the community:

- (i) **Elderly Fitness Equipment** – About 2 280 sets of elderly fitness equipment, including the Rider, Tai Chi Wheels, Pull-down Machine, Twister and Stepper, Ring Walk, Upper Back Stretch, Calf Stretch, Climbing Shoulder Stretch, Back Stretch and Push-ups, Bicycle Stepper, and Up and Down Station, are provided in over 440 outdoor leisure venues managed by the LCSD to meet the needs of the elderly. In line with the initiatives to develop Hong Kong into an age-friendly city and promote active ageing as announced in the 2016 Policy Address, the LCSD will provide about 150 sets of new elderly fitness equipment in the outdoor leisure venues (such as parks and playgrounds) in the 18 districts. The installation works of the facilities are expected to be completed in 2017-18.

- (ii) **Pet Gardens** – The LCSD has all along adopted a proactive approach to address the demand of dog owners for more pet gardens by designating specific areas in parks as pet gardens after obtaining the support of the respective district councils and the local community. The number of pet gardens managed by the LCSD has increased from 19 to 41 between 2010-11 and 1 May 2016. Pet accesses are also provided in six parks (including four venues provided with pet gardens) to meet the needs of the public. The LCSD plans to provide seven new pet gardens in 2016 and 2017, and will continue to identify suitable venues in existing or planned parks for the provision of additional pet gardens to cater for the demand of dog owners.

- (iii) **Angling Zones Pilot Scheme** – To promote a water-friendly culture, the LCSD will implement a pilot scheme of angling zones in three LCSD leisure venues in 2016-17, which include Central and Western District Promenade (Central Section), Pak Shek Kok Promenade in Tai Po and Cheung Fai Road Promenade in Tsing Yi. These venues will be provided with designated angling zones and ancillary facilities, including benches, shade structures, signboards and angling facilities, etc., so that the public may take part in angling activities in a more pleasant environment.

Adding an Arts Dimension to Public Open Space

Promoting Public Art

4. One of the missions of the LCSD is to promote arts and culture in Hong Kong through nurturing local artists and building audience. Apart from organising a wide range

of cultural programmes in our arts venues such as museums and art spaces, we have also added an arts and culture dimension to our public open spaces and pleasure grounds in recent years. In recent years, the LCSD has launched the following initiatives to make public spaces more interesting and vibrant (photos at Annex):

- (i) Park Déco – The LCSD partners with local artists and designers in drawing up new design for public parks and park furniture. The first Park Déco pilot scheme was launched in Quarry Bay Park in May 2011 and the second one launched in Cornwall Street Park was concluded in September 2012. In addition to new signage, altogether six sets of innovative and creative park furniture were installed in the two parks. During the implementation of the scheme, a set of design parameters was also drawn up for reference in building new parks and renovating the existing parks.
- (ii) ArtAlive@Park – The LCSD partners with local tertiary institutions to bring art to the community through the installation of artworks in major parks (e.g. Kowloon Park, Sha Tin Park, Tuen Mun Park). Through displaying the public artworks of university student artists in highly patronised LCSD parks, the scheme also helps nurture the creativity of a new generation of young artistic talents.
- (iii) Art in Government Buildings – In collaboration with other Government departments, the LCSD arranges for the installation of public artwork in open spaces of Government venues, providing residents with more opportunity to interact with and appreciate more artworks. Since its inception in 2010, 17 local artist groups were invited to produce public artworks that tie in with the themes and environmental characteristics of the local community for 17 government buildings across Hong Kong.
- (iv) Other public art projects in parks – Jointly presented with the Sai Kung District Council, the LCSD launched the “Sai Kung District Council Public Art Project 2009” to incorporate artworks in the open space of parks for public enjoyment. The installation of four artworks by local artists was completed in mid-2011 at Man Yee Playground in Sai Kung, Po Tsui Park and Po Hong Park in Tseung Kwan O. Besides, to tie in with the completion of the Hong Kong Velodrome, the LCSD has commissioned three art groups for artwork installation in the park at the Velodrome in collaboration with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD). Three sets of artworks were installed between mid-2014 and early

2015 to provide the public with the opportunity to appreciate art while using leisure and recreational facilities.

Advancing Culture and Creativity

5. Apart from the parks, the LCSD has designated certain areas at the outdoor areas of four performing arts venues, namely, Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC), Shatin Town Hall (STTH), Tsuen Wan Town Hall and Kwai Tsing Theatre, for hire by registered organisations to host performances, exhibitions, public entertainment and community events. In 2015, a total of 206 cultural and community activities were held at the outdoor areas of these venues. Through collaboration with non-profit-making organisations and art groups, “Creative Market in Partnership @ HKCC” held at the HKCC Piazza creates a platform for people aspiring to careers in creative industries to showcase their creativity and make exchanges with visitors. Furthermore, the LCSD has implemented the “Open Stage” scheme at the STTH since 2010. Similar to some arrangements for street performance overseas, performance area has been designated for performances by individuals or groups free of charge, with no restriction on the art form. Performers are required to pass a simple audition so as to ensure their performances are of a certain artistic standard and comply with the safety and noise control requirements. Since the inception of the scheme in 2010, 49 eligible individual or group performers participated, registered or performed in the scheme, attracting an audience of more than 90 000. An array of arts and cultural activities are also held at our public open spaces and pleasure grounds periodically. A total of 411 arts and cultural activities, including concerts, Cantonese opera, dance performances were held in these venues in 2015. Some of these events were held at the amphitheatres in our pleasure grounds (currently 20 venues are provided with amphitheatres).

Revitalisation and Renovation of Public Open Space

6. The LCSD continues to enhance the facilities in its public open spaces and, in consultation with the relevant District Councils (DCs), commissions the ArchSD to carry out renovation works with an aim to meeting the needs of users, providing a comfortable and vibrant public space for residents. Furthermore, there are also cases where non-governmental organisations or the private sector put forward proposals to construct or renovate public open spaces under the LCSD at their own costs. This can expedite the renovation works to allow the public to enjoy the facilities. Upon receiving such proposals, in consultation with the relevant DCs, the LCSD will carefully consider relevant factors

before committing to take forward the renovation projects in collaboration with the project proponents. The LCSD retains ownership of the open space after the renovation works. Successful examples include Nan Lian Garden and Harbour Road Garden.

Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront Revitalisation Plan

7. The LCSD has already planned to revitalise the cultural facilities and public open space of the Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) waterfront area by stages, including Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Space Museum, Hong Kong Cultural Centre and Salisbury Garden. The Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront Revitalisation Plan (the Plan) aims to renovate ageing facilities, enhance and beautify leisure facilities, and add an arts and cultural dimension for the enjoyment of local communities and visitors. Hong Kong Museum of Art is undergoing a three-year expansion and renovation work.

8. The Government received a proposal in 2014 to revitalise the Avenue of Stars (AoS), Salisbury Garden and TST East Promenade from the organisation that currently manages the AoS. Considering that the AoS bridge structure was built more than 30 years ago in 1982, and because of years of natural wear and tear and the ageing facilities of the bridge deck, it is necessary to carry out repair and improvement works to meet the needs of visitors and operational requirements. In consultation with the relevant DCs and stakeholders, the LCSD agreed to implement the Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront Revitalisation Plan in collaboration with the project proponent. To further deepen the public's understanding of the Plan and encourage more public participation, the LCSD held a public engagement exercise from September to November 2015 to collect public views. The majority of the respondents supported the idea of enhancing and beautifying the TST waterfront area but wished to have fewer structures to be built on it so that people can stroll on a more spacious area and enjoy an unobstructed view of Victoria Harbour. Respondents also expressed the wish to shorten the period during which the area had to be closed for renovation. In this regard, the LCSD decided to revise the design of the TST East Promenade by adopting a simple design and maintaining the area as a passive public open space.

9. Under the modified Plan, enhancement works for the Salisbury Garden will commence in the second quarter of 2016 and the Salisbury Garden is expected to be re-opened in the second quarter of 2017. The bridge deck of the AoS is now carrying out repair and improvement works. The revitalisation works of the AoS, including the addition of green features and outdoor seating, will commence following the completion of the bridge deck repair works in early 2018. The entire project is expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2018. Upon the completion of the project, the Salisbury Garden and AoS will be

transformed into an even more diversified and vibrant public open space with a rich cultural ambience for arts performance and programmes, and achieve synergy with the opening of the renovated Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in close proximity. The TST East Promenade will remain as a public open space primarily for passive amenities. Apart from a food and beverage outlet currently managed by the LCSD, no additional structure will be built. Basic improvement works including the refurbishment of railings and floor tiles and upgrading of ancillary facilities such as the provision of additional parking spaces for coaches and a new toilet block will be carried out in early 2019.

10. The LCSD briefed the Yau Tsim Mong District Council and the Harbourfront Commission's Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing on the above revised Plan. The revitalisation works of the Salisbury Garden will be carried out as planned. The revitalised design of the AoS is being revised and we will consult the stakeholders on the revised design in due course.

Way Forward

11. Hong Kong is a densely populated city and members of the public frequently use our pleasure grounds and public open spaces. The LCSD is committed to beautifying and upgrading its facilities in pleasure grounds and public open spaces as well as enhancing the cultural and artistic ambience of such facilities. The LCSD will proceed with the Plan and transform the TST waterfront area into an even more attractive and vibrant public space for the enjoyment of local communities and visitors by increasing its connectivity with surrounding areas.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

June 2016

Bringing Art into Public Open Space

(i) Park Déco

Cornwall Street Park



Quarry Bay Park



(ii) ArtAlive@Park

Lawn of the Central and Western District Promenade (Central Section)



Tsim Sha Tsui East Waterfront Podium Garden



Tai Po Waterfront Park



Stanley Promenade



Tuen Mun Park



(iii) Public Art Scheme

Po Tsui Park



Po Hong Park



Man Yee Playground in Sai Kung



Hong Kong Velodrome Park

