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Panel on Home Affairs

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 23 April 2018**

Sports development in Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper summarizes the past discussion of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on issues relating to the sports development in Hong Kong since the Fifth Legislative Council ("LegCo").

Background

2. The Government has promoted the development of sports in Hong Kong through a three-pronged approach: to promote sports for all, to support elite sports and to maintain Hong Kong as a centre for major sports events. The Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") works in consultation with the Sports Commission ("SC") and its three Committees, namely the Community Sports Committee ("CSC"), the Elite Sports Committee ("ESC") and the Major Sports Events Committee ("MSEC"), on policy, planning and related measures to develop and promote community sport, elite sport and major sports events respectively.¹ The Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") is

¹ In April 2001, HAB established a Sports Policy Review Team ("the Review Team") to conduct a comprehensive review of the Government's sports policy. In May 2002, the Review Team published a report entitled "Towards a More Sporting Future" outlining the direction for future sports policy. Following up on the recommendations set out in the Report, the Government announced its decision in July 2003 to establish a new administrative structure for sports development. Under the new structure, the then Hong Kong Sports Development Board ("SDB") was dissolved in June 2004; the Hong Kong Sports Institute was re-constituted to become an incorporated body in October 2004 to undertake matters pertaining to high performance sports training formerly under the auspices of SDB; and a new Sports Commission under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Home Affairs was established in January 2005 to advise the Government on the policies, strategies and implementation framework for sports development and the provision of funding and resources in support of sports development.

responsible for planning and managing sports and recreation facilities, promoting sport in the community, and providing funding support to the relevant sports organizations in line with the established policy. HAB also collaborates closely with stakeholders in the sports sector, including the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China ("SF&OC"), the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI"), National Sports Associations ("NSAs") and other sports organizations in promoting sports development in Hong Kong.

Deliberations of the Panel

3. Issues relating to sports development were discussed by the Panel at a number of meetings. The major views and concerns of members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Provision of public sports facilities

4. Members were concerned about how sports for all and athletes' performance could be enhanced in view of the long-standing shortage of sports facilities in Hong Kong. Members urged the Administration to provide more sports venues, enhance the standard and management of existing facilities and encourage schools to open their sports venues for use by the public or sports organizations outside school hours, so as to meet the needs of the sports sector and the public. There was also a view that HAB and the Education Bureau ("EDB") should work in collaboration and where necessary, support the financial consequences arising from the schools' opening up of their sports facilities for community use.

5. According to the Administration, in planning new facilities, the Administration would make reference to the planning standards set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the policy objectives for sports development, the utilization rates of existing facilities, the preferences of members of the public, views of District Councils, NSAs and schools sports organizations as well as the extent to which such facilities were provided by the Government and other non-governmental organizations. As announced in the 2017 Policy Address, the Administration planned to spend \$20 billion in the next five years to launch 26 projects to develop new or improve existing sports and recreation facilities. The new or enhanced sports and recreation facilities to be provided under the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities ("the Five-Year Plan") included two sports grounds, nine football pitches, one sports centre, four swimming pool complexes, two lawn bowling greens, one cycling ground, four tennis courts, 11 outdoor basketball courts and 20 open spaces. In addition, the Administration would conduct technical feasibility studies for another 15 sports and recreation facility projects to prepare for their implementation in the future. Members considered that these projects were

long-awaited by the districts and could significantly increase the provision of and improve existing sports and recreation facilities as well as open spaces. At the policy briefing cum meeting on 23 October 2017, the Administration advised that it would continue to take forward the 26 projects under the Five-Year Plan, and the construction works of the Kai Tak Sports Park were expected to commence in the second half of 2018 and be completed in 2022-2023. Furthermore, starting from the 2017-2018 school year, EDB and HAB had launched the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme, which provided additional subsidies to public sector schools to encourage them to open up their school facilities to sports associations and help promote a sporting culture in schools.

Educational and career development 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 called on to increase the funding provided to HKSI and provide additional financial support to schools to nurture elite student athletes on a per capita basis.

7. When discussing with the Administration the educational and career development support for elite athletes at the Panel meeting on 10 April 2015, members were informed that HKSI had been working with the education sector to develop three new educational programmes for elite athletes, namely the Secondary Education Programme, the Professional Accreditation Programme and the Flexible Tertiary Education. To build further on the "dual career model", HKSI had been working with secondary schools to run a Partnership School Programme where the participating schools would provide a tailor-made and highly integrated curriculum for athlete students, enabling them to train full-time whilst continuing to pursue their studies at senior secondary level. At the meeting on 22 May 2017, members noted that HKSI had signed the Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with the Education University of Hong Kong and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and would sign another MOU with the Hong Kong Baptist University shortly. Under such MOU, the universities concerned would make flexible arrangements for elite student athletes for their studies, e.g. by extending the period of study of a four-year undergraduate programme to eight years.

8. Members generally took the view that uncertain prospect for elite athletes after retirement had deterred parents from encouraging their children to pursue a

sports career. There was a suggestion that HAB should take the lead to coordinate with EDB to raise students' interest in non-academic subjects and to also request the tertiary institutions to review their admission criteria to avoid over-emphasis on students' academic achievement and encourage the institutions to admit students who excelled in non-academic subjects, such as Physical Education ("PE"). This apart, the Administration should consider providing subsidy for retired athletes to study abroad. The Administration was called on to nominate eligible student athletes to study at overseas universities if no suitable programmes were available at local universities.

9. The Administration advised that while local tertiary institutions had their autonomy to admit students and the enrolment requirements for individual programmes offered by different institutions might vary, the eight University Grants Committee-funded tertiary institutions had accepted athletes nominated for admission by HKSI and SF&OC. Furthermore, the Hong Kong Athletes Fund ("HKAF") also provided grants to elite athletes to pursue their studies at approved overseas colleges or universities if no comparable courses were offered in Hong Kong. Retired athletes who were undertaking long-term full-time study programmes might apply to HKAF for a subsistence allowance.

10. In response to members' concern about the provision of career development support for elite athletes, the Administration advised that it had allocated funding to SF&OC to establish the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme in collaboration with the business sector, with a view to improving the education and career prospects for serving and retired athletes. HKSI had also implemented programmes to meet the educational and career development needs of elite athletes. Arrangements had also been made for retired elite athletes to work as coaches and programme coordinators in NSAs and in schools.

Support for non-elite athletes and disabled elite athletes

11. Members considered that the educational need and career prospects of non-elite athletes should not be neglected having regard to their contribution to the sports development in Hong Kong, and assistance should also be made available to both elite and non-elite athletes in need. Members also urged the Administration to allocate more resources to the promotion of participation in sports by people with disabilities ("PWDs") in order to lay a better foundation for the long-term development of elite athletes with disabilities ("AWDs"). There was a view that the Administration should accord the same treatment to able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes, so that AWDs might participate in sports on a full-time basis.

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 advised that the Government's sports policy did not target only at elite sports but also covered the development of non-elite sports such as football. Educational and career support would be provided to both elite and non-elite athletes in need. The disparity in the amounts of incentive awards to and subsidy received by able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes was largely attributed to the different historical backgrounds under which the respective financial assistance schemes were drawn up.

13. At the policy briefing cum meeting on 23 October 2017, the Administration advised that to promote the development of team ball games, it would launch a five-year development programme to provide additional funding to eight NSAs (i.e. Basketball, Volleyball, Handball, Water Polo, Ice Hockey, Hockey, Baseball and Softball) to formulate and implement training programmes for Hong Kong representative teams to compete in the Asian Games. As regards promotion of sports for PWDs, the Administration had developed a detailed work plan in collaboration with stakeholders for implementing various key measures, including the introduction of a full-time athlete system and implementation of a Pilot Scheme for Elite Vote Support System for disability sports, with the 2018 Jakarta Asian Para Games as the testing ground.

Promoting sports in schools

14. Concern was raised as to whether the Government's sports policy was formulated in consultation with EDB. Some members were of the view that EDB should play a more active role in taking forward the policy objective of developing sports in the community. There was a view that to raise students' interest in sports and promote among schools a sporting culture, a more effective measure was to make PE a "core" subject for academic study and increase the time on PE lessons in the curriculum to facilitate more sporting opportunities for students.

15. According to the Administration, EDB was represented on CSC under SC to advise the Administration on matters relating to the development of school sports. Many CSC members were from the school sector and had provided valuable views and advice on how to make PE an important and integral part of the school curriculum. While PE had been one of the eight Key Learning Areas of the school curriculum for primary and secondary levels, there were divergent views in the education community regarding whether PE should be a "core" subject in public examinations. In addition to curriculum, EDB implemented a series of measures (including organizing through schools parent-child physical activities and collaborating with non-government bodies in organizing sports activities/programmes such as Inter-school Sports, the

School Sports Programme Coordinator Pilot Scheme and the School Physical Fitness Award Scheme) to strengthen the collaboration between schools, sports organizations and parents to cultivate students' interest in physical activity.

Governance and monitoring of NSAs

16. Members also expressed grave concern about the governance and monitoring of NSAs, notwithstanding that the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") had drawn up Best Practice Reference for Governance of National Sports Associations ("BPR") in consultation with HAB, LCSD and some NSAs. Some members were concerned about the implementation of BPR by NSAs and suggested that the Administration should establish a mechanism for the ongoing monitoring of NSAs, e.g. requiring NSAs to upload their financial statements, information on eligibility for membership and membership fees onto their websites. Concern was also raised about the lack of transparency and fairness in the selection of athletes for participation in international sports competitions. There was also a suggestion that the Government should review the governance, funding mechanism and operation of various NSAs.

17. According to the Administration, NSAs were required to sign a subvention agreement with LCSD and report to LCSD the expenditure position and activity progress at regular intervals. LCSD also conducted on-the-spot quality assurance checks on NSAs. LCSD and ICAC would join hands to approach all NSAs proactively to provide tailor-made advice and services to help individual NSAs to implement the measures recommended in BPR according to their individual needs and mode of operation. NSAs were encouraged to implement as soon as possible the best practices in BPR, in particular those relating to enhancement of transparency, selection of athletes, procurement, declaration of interests and uploading of audited financial statements onto their websites.

18. The Administration further explained that the selection of Hong Kong athletes to compete in international competitions, such as the Olympic Games, was the prerogative of SF&OC which had an established mechanism for selection of athletes through its member NSAs. As NSAs had their own established mechanisms for selection of athletes, it would not be appropriate for the Administration to interfere with the operation of such mechanisms. This notwithstanding, the Administration was implementing a number of measures, including the issuance of BPR, to assist SF&OC and NSAs to enhance their governance. NSAs were requested to adopt consistent criteria in the selection of athletes and inform the athletes of the criteria timely.

Latest development

19. The Administration will brief the Panel on the latest progress of the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme at the next meeting on 23 April 2018.

Relevant papers

20. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
17 April 2018

**Relevant papers on
Sports development in Hong Kong**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	9.11.2012 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	14.12.2012 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes
	24.1.2014 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	19.3.2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 8794 - 8891 (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") Progress report
Panel on Home Affairs	6.2.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	10.4.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	12.6.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	24.3.2016 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	11.11.2016 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes
	20.1.2017 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	22.5.2017 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	23.10.2017 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

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