

立法會

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Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 20 July 2018

Development of football in Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper summarizes the past discussion of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on the development of football in Hong Kong.

Background

Hong Kong Football Association

2. Hong Kong Football Association ("HKFA"), which is affiliated to the Federation Internationale de Football Association, is the recognized national sports association governing the promotion and development of football in Hong Kong. The setting of priorities and objectives in the promotion and development of local football falls within the purview of HKFA. Its work includes organizing local leagues, selecting and supervising Hong Kong representative teams that play at international level, and arranging overseas football teams to play exhibition matches.

Consultancy Study on Football Development in Hong Kong

3. In June 2009, the Administration commissioned a consultant to study the development of football in Hong Kong and recommend viable options. The Administration briefed the Panel on the major recommendations of the consultancy study on football development in Hong Kong ("the Consultancy Study") on 17 March 2010. Members were advised, among other things, that football in Hong Kong was far from meeting its full development potential. However, it was possible to envisage a transformation of football in Hong Kong within the next five to 10 years if changes were implemented in a timely and effective way.

4. In order to help take forward the recommendations of the Consultancy Study, the Administration set up in May 2011 the Football Task Force ("FTF"),

chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs and comprising members from the sports and other sectors, to advise on and monitor the implementation of the related measures.

"Project Phoenix"

5. According to the Administration, HKFA appointed a "change agent" in October 2010 to formulate a football development strategy, entitled the "Project Phoenix", to help HKFA in the areas of governance structure, development strategy and business planning in order to take forward the recommendations made by the Consultancy Study. The Sports Commission endorsed in October 2011 a proposal to earmark a maximum of \$20 million annually over a period of three years from 2011-2012 onwards for allocation to HKFA to implement the "Project Phoenix". After an overall review of "Project Phoenix" in mid-2014, FTF concluded that HKFA had made reasonable progress in further developing football in Hong Kong through the implementation of "Project Phoenix", while considering that HKFA needed to do more to develop a branding and marketing strategy and to strengthen its governance capability.

Hong Kong Football Association's Five-year Strategic Plan 2015-2020

6. At the Panel meeting on 9 January 2015, the Administration informed members that as well as reviewing the implementation of "Project Phoenix", FTF had also considered the Five-year Strategic Plan proposed by HKFA for the further development of football in Hong Kong.¹ FTF concluded that the plan represented a logical and progressive way forward based on the groundwork done under "Project Phoenix". The Government has agreed to allocate a maximum of \$25 million annually to HKFA for five years from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2020 to support the implementation of the Five-year Strategic Plan. Performance indicators and targets (in **Appendix I**) formed part of the funding agreement to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the Five-year Strategic Plan, and HKFA would submit to FTF half-yearly reports, including a summary of progress against these performance indicators and targets. During the examination of the draft Estimates of Expenditure 2018-2019, the Administration advised that up to 28 February 2018, about \$62 million had been allocated to HKFA for the implementation of the Five-year Strategic Plan.

Discussion held by the Panel

7. The Panel discussed progress of the development of football in Hong Kong on 9 January 2015. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

¹ An executive summary of the Five-year Strategic Plan is at Annex 3 to LC Paper No. CB(2)543/14-15(03).

Targets and indicators for the Five-year Strategic Plan

Development and promotion of football

8. Some members considered that the objective of promoting and developing football in Hong Kong could not be achieved in a short span of time. Whilst HKFA should continue to be provided with appropriate support and resources for implementing the Five-year Strategic Plan, it would need "buy-in" from all stakeholders in Hong Kong to enable local football to flourish. These members suggested that the Administration should explore other sources of funding, e.g. soliciting commercial sponsorship from the business sector, to support the operation of football teams. They also suggested that the Hong Kong Jockey Club should be invited to consider allocating some of its revenue from betting to assist the development of local football.

9. The Administration agreed that the development of football would require time, and it was important for HKFA to continue with its efforts towards the further development of local football. The Administration advised that the provision of funding support for the implementation of HKFA's Five-year Strategic Plan demonstrated the Administration's commitment to supporting the development of football in Hong Kong.

10. Some members considered that the development of high quality local players and number of spectators to football matches were pivotal to football development. They enquired whether quantifiable targets were set in these two respects. Members also raised concern about the sufficiency of professional football players, coaches and referees.

11. The Administration advised that the overall aim was to encourage more people (both male and female) to play football. HKFA also advised that it had stepped up its training programmes for coaches and referees with a view to providing more support to young players with keen interest in football.

12. In view of the problem of under-attendance for local football matches, some members suggested that concessionary tickets could be made available to senior citizens or full-time students to help promote local football matches. The Administration advised that some Hong Kong Premier League clubs had introduced seasonal tickets for the general public, and the current \$20 admission fee for students was comparatively low among various types of entertainment. Some clubs also allowed free entry to matches for students.

13. In response to members' enquiry on measures for promoting girls' and women's football, HKFA advised that the following work had been implemented:

- (a) since the implementation of "Project Phoenix", the Women's Football Association had been incorporated into HKFA and many new girl's and women's training programmes and activities, which mirrored those of the boy's and men's, had been developed;
- (b) HKFA had devoted a substantial portion of expenditure to women's and girls' football; and
- (c) HKFA would consider employing a head coach for Women's Representative Team and Academy, and HKFA Women's Football Section would work closely with the Coach Education Section and Referees Department to increase the number and quality of female coaches and officials.

Promotion of futsal

14. Some members suggested that futsal, a five-a-side game, served as a good introduction and complementary activity to the regular 11-a-side football. They pointed out that futsal could be played on small hard courts in schools and sports grounds, lending itself well to the nature of sports facilities in Hong Kong. They suggested that the Education Bureau should create an enabling environment for the promotion of football/futsal in schools by increasing the financial support to schools and providing more coordinated support (including homework guidance) to elite/talented student players to assist them in pursuing their studies while taking part in football/futsal training. Some members also suggested providing dual-use courts for basketball and futsal games in schools.

15. HKFA agreed that futsal should receive more attention and resources and undertook that it would promote futsal across the education sector and organize local futsal competitions among schools and at community level.

Suspected "match fixing"

16. Some members expressed concern that there were also incidents of suspected "match fixing" in matches of HKFA leagues, bringing disrepute to the football sport in Hong Kong. Some other members also enquired whether and how HKFA had cooperated with the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") in the prevention of corruption and match fixing within the local football sector.

17. HKFA advised that it had been working closely with ICAC. Apart from conducting workshops on relevant topics for football players and teams, ICAC had provided advice to HKFA during its preparation and publication of "Code of Conduct" and "Rules of Conduct for Players and Team/Match Officials" for

the governing and guiding of the conducts and behaviours of those involved in the game of football. These apart, HKFA had rendered full assistance to ICAC whenever complaints alleging corruption or match fixing arose and throughout the course of ICAC's investigation. HKFA stressed that there was no place for criminal activity in football and HKFA would adopt a zero-tolerance approach to anyone convicted of a crime related to football activity. In addition, HKFA had appointed a specialist company to provide match-fixing prevention and detection services.

Improvement of facilities

18. A number of members expressed concern about the lack of suitable/quality facilities for playing football (including training and competition) in Hong Kong. Some members suggested that the Administration should streamline the booking arrangements and procedures of allocation of football pitches under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"). There was also a view that it was necessary to provide dedicated training pitches for Hong Kong men's and women's representative squad training at all age levels.

19. The Administration advised that the following measures were taken to improve facilities for playing football:

- (a) LCSD was increasing the provision of pitches with "third generation" artificial turf which could be used far more frequently and at lower maintenance cost than grass pitches without the need to allow for lengthy rest periods;
- (b) the Administration would continue to build new mini soccer pitches, including 5 or 7-a-side hard-surfaced mini soccer pitches, to cope with the demand; and
- (c) thorough improvement works to enhance the long-term quality and durability of the pitch of the Hong Kong Stadium had been planned. The reconstruction would start within 2015.

Recent development

20. The Administration will brief the Panel on the mid-term review of HKFA's Five-year Strategic Plan at the next meeting on 20 July 2018.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 July 2018

Five-year Strategic Plan of the Hong Kong Football Association

Abstract of Targets and Indicators

The following targets and indicators have been adopted in the funding agreement with the HKFA for funding for the Five-year Strategic Plan –

- (a) introduce a Hong Kong Football Curriculum that articulates a consistent style and system of play in Hong Kong by March 2015 and conduct regular review thereafter;
- (b) issue revised Coach Education Courses linked to the Hong Kong Football Curriculum in (a) by June 2015 and conduct regular review thereafter;
- (c) introduce a football development plan before the beginning of 2015/16 football season (which shall build upon the Hong Kong Football Curriculum in (a) above and shall include pathways from beginner to international player level) and conduct regular review thereafter;
- (d) increase the number of participants in the HKFA's grassroots and youth football programmes from 13,330 (in 2013-14) to 15,000 (in 2016-17 and beyond);
- (e) increase the number of girls and women taking part in the programmes of the HKFA from 1,220 (in 2013-14) to 3,000 (in 2019-20), including grassroots programmes, development programmes, elite performers programmes and local competitions (leagues);
- (f) introduce representative age group teams for girls and women by 2017;
- (g) increase the number of participants in the HKFA's futsal programmes from 7,000 (in 2013-14) to 15,000 (in 2018-19 and beyond);
- (h) increase the number of qualified coaches registered with the HKFA from 433 (in 2013-14) to 2,000 (in 2018-19 and beyond);
- (i) increase the number of referees, referee assessors and instructors from 206 (in 2013-14) to 396 (in 2016-17 and beyond);

- (j) increase the average attendance at Hong Kong Premier League matches from 900 (in 2013-14) to 2,500 (in 2019-20);
- (k) prepare a plan for the implementation of a new football facilities strategy to produce a ‘hierarchy’ of good quality facilities, including a Football Training Centre;

Marketing

- (l) increase sponsorship and advertising gross revenue by about 10% each year;
- (m) conduct independent survey on audience based on a minimum of 1,000 match day questionnaires in 2014-15, 2016-17 and 2018-19;
- (n) increase the average daily website hits of the HKFA’s website from 400,000 (in 2013-14) to 600,000 (in 2019-20);
- (o) increase the number of fans on the Hong Kong Premier League Facebook (i.e. number of “Like”s of the page) from 9,000 (in 2013-14) to 15,000 (in 2018-19 and beyond);
- (p) increase the number of fans in the HKFA’s fans e-newsletter database from 18,000 (in 2013-14) to 30,000 (in 2019-20);

Governance and Management

- (q) increase the number of membership of HKFA, including accredited clubs and football schools from 52 (in 2013-14) to 100 (in 2018-19 and beyond);
- (r) elect a total of four independent (non club-linked) directors to the board of directors of the HKFA in the elections held in 2015-16 and 2019-20; and
- (s) adopt a new constitution of the HKFA’s governing body in 2015-16 to reflect AFC/FIFA regulations and conduct regular review on the constitution.

**Relevant papers on
Development of football in Hong Kong**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper / motion / question
Legislative Council	4.6.2008	Members' motion on "Promoting the development of local football" Progress report
Panel on Home Affairs	20.10.2008 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
	8.5.2009 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	6.1.2010	Members' motion on "Promoting the sports development in Hong Kong" Progress report
Panel on Home Affairs	17.3.2010 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	8.11.2013 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	10.1.2014 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	12.2.2014	Official Records of Proceedings Pages 50 to 54
	11.6.2014	Official Records of Proceedings Pages 113 to 114
Panel on Home Affairs	9.1.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes