

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1836/17-18(04)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

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

**Use of public open space managed by the
Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the past discussion of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on the use of public open space managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD").

Background

Management of public open space by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department

2. According to the Administration, 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, LCSD 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. 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.

Upcoming open space projects

3. As announced in the 2017 Policy Address, the Administration plans to spend \$20 billion in the next five years to launch 26 projects to develop new or improve existing sports and recreation facilities, including 20 open space projects.¹ In addition, the Administration will conduct technical feasibility studies for another 15 sports and recreation facility projects to prepare for their implementation in the future.

¹ Please see Annex to Appendix I

Deliberations of the Panel

4. The Panel discussed the management of public open space under LCSD at its meeting on 14 June 2016. The major views and concerns of members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Management of public open space

5. Some members raised concern that too many restrictions were imposed on the use of park facilities (e.g. no stepping on lawns), which should be relaxed so as to enhance visitors' enjoyment. They considered that the installation of large-scale artworks and creative furniture in public parks might reduce the space available for visitors' leisure enjoyment. There was also a suggestion that LCSD might consider setting up designated zones in public parks for holding performances and bazaars.

6. The Administration advised that LCSD had suitably relaxed restrictions on the use of lawn areas in public parks (such as the Tamar Park and the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal Park) in response to public views. The Administration further advised that the Park Déco pilot scheme² had been launched in selected public parks to make public space more vibrant and to provide venues for display of artworks, which would not only help nurture the creativity of young artists but also provide more opportunities for the public to appreciate art.

7. Some members enquired whether LCSD would delegate the responsibility of managing public parks and playgrounds to District Councils ("DCs"), and inviting the public and residents' organizations to give views on the use of public open space. The Administration advised that LCSD had been working closely with the District Facilities Management Committees under DCs on the management of recreational facilities in districts. LCSD would relay any views and suggestions of improvements from residents and the public to DCs concerned for consideration.

8. Some members enquired whether LCSD would deploy additional manpower to impose more stringent control on the use of amplifiers for entertainment/performances in public parks, particularly the Tuen Mun Park and the Hoi Sham Park, so as to mitigate the noise nuisance caused to residents in the vicinity. The Administration explained that LCSD had implemented noise control measures in public parks such as the Tuen Mun Park, the Hoi Sham Park and the Butterfly Beach Park, and more staff had been deployed for the task. The assistance of the Police would be sought where necessary. LCSD would

² Under the scheme, LCSD partners with local artists and designers in drawing up new design for public parks and park furniture.

also educate the performers to use the entertainment zones and explore the need to tighten up the control of the use of amplifiers in public parks/playgrounds.

Provision of facilities in public open space

9. Some members took the view that more elderly fitness equipment should be installed in the outdoor leisure venues under the management of LCSD to meet the needs of the aging population. They also requested LCSD to shorten the time needed for the maintenance and repair of such equipment.

10. The Administration advised that the installation of about 150 sets of new elderly fitness equipment in the outdoor leisure venues in the 18 districts would be completed in 2017-2018. LCSD would liaise with the technical support teams to shorten the time required for repairing the elderly fitness equipment and keep enough stocks for replacement of parts and accessories when necessary.

11. Some members also considered that the play equipment for children in public parks lacked variety and called on LCSD to regularly review the design. The Administration explained that the design of the play equipment for children in public parks had taken into account the local residents' needs and safety concerns. LCSD would continue to enhance the design and variety of the play equipment in public parks from time to time.

12. Some members suggested that that the Administration should provide more pet gardens in promenades to meet the needs of the public and specifically requested LCSD to explore the feasibility of allowing the entry of pets to the Tamar Park on Saturdays and Sundays. The Administration advised LCSD would consider the suggestion in consultation with the DC concerned. Pet gardens with accesses were currently provided in Central and Western District Promenade (Central and Sheung Wan sections) and Quarry Bay Park, and pet corners were also set up in various leisure venues.

Latest development

13. The Panel will discuss the use of public open space managed by LCSD at the next meeting on 20 July 2018.

Relevant Legislative Council question

14. At the Council meeting of 22 March 2017, Hon James TO raised a written question on the development of derelict open space sites. Mr TO's question and the Administration's reply are in **Appendix I**.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 July 2018

Appendix I

Press Releases

LCQ10: Development of derelict open space sites

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (March 22):

Question:

The Government has advised in this year's Policy Address that it has decided to significantly increase the provision of sports facilities and will additionally build or rebuild 26 sports and recreational facilities (SRF projects) in the coming five years. Among such projects, I have found that the consent of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council (DC) was obtained in 2009 for the project on the open space site at Hoi Fan Road, Tai Kok Tsui (including one 7-a-side football pitch and two outdoor basketball courts), and the consent of the Community Building Committee under the said DC was obtained in 2010 for the project on the open space site at Hoi Fai Road, Tai Kok Tsui. However, the authorities have not yet submitted funding applications to the Finance Council (FC) of this Council with regard to these two Tai Kok Tsui projects. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the reasons why the authorities have not yet submitted funding applications to FC with regard to the two aforesaid Tai Kok Tsui projects;

(2) apart from the two Tai Kok Tsui projects, of the projects among the remaining 24 SRF projects in respect of which the authorities have submitted papers to the relevant DCs for discussion (set out by project name the name of the DC and the relevant meeting dates); whether the authorities have drawn up a priority list for funding applications for such projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) apart from the aforesaid 26 SRF projects, of the current number of proposed SRF projects for which consent of the relevant DCs has been obtained (set out by project name the name of the DC, the relevant meeting dates and the reasons for not yet submitting the funding applications to FC); the measures that the authorities have in place to accelerate the planning progress of such projects;

(4) given that, according to the relevant standards under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the Kwai Ching District with a current population of about 520 000 should be provided with district open space of a total area of 52.4 hectares, but the total area of the district open space in the district is only 19 hectares at present, whether the authorities have plans to expeditiously open up, within the current term of the Government, the Kwai Chung Park, which has an area of 27 hectares and has been left derelict for 16 years, for use by residents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) of the current open space sites in Hong Kong that have been left derelict for a long time (set out the locations and areas of such sites by DC district)?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the five parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) As announced in the 2017 Policy Address, the Government plans to launch 26 projects in the coming five years to develop new or improve existing sports and recreational facilities in different districts, and will conduct technical feasibility study for another 15 sports and recreation facility projects to prepare for their implementation.

Of the 26 projects for implementation in the coming five years, there are 20 open space projects (as set out at Annex) including the two projects at Hoi Fai Road and Hoi Fan Road. In line with prevailing practices, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) consults the relevant District Councils during various key stages of planning the individual projects with a view to seeking Members' views on the scope of works and the design before finalising the planning details and seeking funding in accordance with the established procedures for public works projects.

In planning the two projects at Hoi Fai Road and Hoi Fan Road, LCSD has been working closely with stakeholders notably the Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) and the Harbourfront Commission. For the Hoi Fai Road project, the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) has revised the design of the project in the light of the views of YTMDC and the Harbourfront Commission. As regards the Hoi Fan Road project, ArchSD has completed a technical feasibility study and will engage consultants for the design work. Upon completion of the design, LCSD will consult the YTMDC. Subject to the progress of the design work and consultation, we will seek funding in accordance with the established procedures for public works projects.

Among the 26 projects in the Five-Year Plan, the Government plans to consult the relevant Panels of the Legislative Council and seek the funding approval of the Finance Committee in 2017-18 for five projects including Avenue Park at Kai Tak, waterfront promenade adjacent to the Hong Kong Children's Hospital, improvement of Hoi Bun Road Park and adjacent area, Kwun Tong, open space at Sze Mei Street, San Po Kong, and sports ground and open space in Area 16, Tuen Mun. The other projects will be submitted to the Legislative Council in subsequent years.

(3) In drawing up the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities, the Government has taken into account the views and priorities of the District Councils, as well as other relevant considerations such as the current provision of sports and recreation facilities at the territory-wide and district levels, the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), the policy objective of sports development, utilisation rates of existing facilities, demographic changes, site availability and technical feasibility.

As regards other proposed new projects that have been discussed by District Councils, they are at different planning stages and most of them have not completed a technical feasibility study. Under the Five-Year Plan, we will conduct technical feasibility study for 15 sports and recreation facility projects to prepare for their implementation.

(4) With reference to the HKPSG, a total of about 102 hectares (ha) of open space should be provided in Kwai Tsing District which has a population of 510 900 in 2017. Currently there are about 148 ha of open space in Kwai Tsing District, which exceeds the recommended provision under the HKPSG.

As regards the Kwai Chung Park, it is one of the 26 projects for implementation in the coming five years under the Five-Year Plan. LCSD has been working closely with stakeholders notably the Kwai Tsing District Council (KwTDC) on the planning of the project. After receiving comments of KwTDC Members on the proposed scope of facilities in February 2017, LCSD is now actively following up on the planning details.

(5) The open space sites where LCSD is responsible for development but works have yet to commence are listed at Annex. LCSD has not taken possession of any vacant open space sites from relevant bureaux/departments other than the site of 0.84 ha earmarked for the open space project at Hoi Fai Road, which is temporarily used as a plant nursery.

Ends/Wednesday, March 22, 2017
Issued at HKT 11:33

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20 Open space projects to be implemented in the coming five years

District	Project Name
Kowloon City	1. Avenue Park at Kai Tak #
	2. Hoi Sham Park Extension, To Kwa Wan
	3. Station Square at Kai Tak
	4. Waterfront Promenade adjacent to the Hong Kong Children's Hospital #
Kwun Tong	5. Improvement of Hoi Bun Road Park and Adjacent Area, Kwun Tong #
	6. Improvement of Lam Wah Street Playground and Adjacent Area, Kwun Tong
Wong Tai Sin	7. Open Space at Sze Mei Street, San Po Kong #
Yau Tsim Mong	8. Open Space at Hoi Fai Road, Tai Kok Tsui
	9. Open Space at Hoi Fan Road, Tai Kok Tsui
Yau Tsim Mong & Kowloon City	10. Open Space at Hung Hom Waterfront
Kwai Tsing	11. Kwai Chung Park
North	12. Open Space in Area 47 and 48, North District
Sai Kung	13. Town Park in Area 66 and 68, Tseung Kwan O
Tai Po	14. Open Space in Area 6, Tai Po
Tuen Mun	15. Open Space in Area 6, Tuen Mun
	16. Open Space in Area 17, Tuen Mun
	17. Open Space in Area 27, Tuen Mun
	18. Sports Ground and Open Space in Area 16, Tuen Mun #
Yuen Long	19. Redevelopment of Tung Tau Industrial Area Playground, Yuen Long
	20. Swimming Pool Complex and Open Space in Area 107, Tin Shui Wai

The Government is planning to consult the relevant LegCo Panels and seek the funding approval of the Finance Committee for these projects or relevant pre-construction works in 2017-18.

**Relevant papers on
Use of public open space managed by the
Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	14.6.2016 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	20.1.2017 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	22.3.2017	Official Records of Proceedings Pages 73 to 77

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