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28 December 2018

(Urgent by email)

Mr Anthony CHU
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr CHU,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of Chapter 10 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 71
Hong Kong Velodrome and Hong Kong Velodrome Park

Thank you for your letter of 13 December 2018, referring the views of the Public Accounts Committee for "Chapter 10 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 71 - Hong Kong Velodrome and Hong Kong Velodrome Park". We would like to provide our response to the matters set out in the Appendix (including both Chinese and English versions).

Should you have any enquiries, please call me or Mr Kent CHOI, Manager (Hong Kong Velodrome & Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground) at Tel: 2878 8633.

Yours sincerely

(Ms Camay LEE)

for Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Report No. 71 of the Director of Audit
Chapter 10 - Hong Kong Velodrome and Hong Kong Velodrome Park

Response from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department
to Public Accounts Committee

Part 2: Project Management

- 10) According to paragraph 2.25(b), Consultant X had confirmed with the Cycling Association of Hong Kong, China (CAHK) about the surface materials and design parameters. Why are there still the issues of wavy problem and non-compliance with CAHK's requirements in respect of the surface?

Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)'s Response

The Hong Kong Velodrome (HKV) is the first ever indoor cycling facility in Hong Kong that was built in accordance with the international standards of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) for world-class track cycling training and competitions. During the planning, design and construction stages of the Project, all major stakeholders including the LCSD, ArchSD and CAHK had collaborated closely and incorporated CAHK's requirements such as surface materials and design parameter into the tender documents with a view to best suiting the training mode and practical needs of the Hong Kong Cycling Team (HKC Team) and meeting the requirements for hosting large-scale international competitions

The cycling track was carefully assembled by professional and experienced technicians with more than 10 000 Siberian Pine wooden slats, each of size about 4cm width and 6m long. After the completion of HKV, the facilities were inspected and accepted by government works departments, as well as homologated by the UCI as Category 1 standard. According to overseas experience, it is not uncommon for a newly installed wooden track to encounter slight wavy problems in certain parts of the track. In this connection, the LCSD conducted several performance tests in various forms and scales (i.e. professional training and competitions) during the initial operating period of the HKV to test the overall performance of the cycling track, as well as to take timely action to resolve the wavy problem through refinement and fine-tuning of the track.

To continually improve our services and to better cope with the high level of training needs of the HKC team, the LCSD has been observing the HKC team's professional comments and practical experience on the cycling track and venue facilities. It was decided to carry out the track enhancement works to further improve the performance of the track surface so as to meet the requirements for hosting large-scale international competitions, better suit the training mode and practical needs of the HKC Team in future and support the long-term development of local track cycling activities.

Since the commissioning of the HKV in 2014, a number of world-class track cycling competitions, including the "2017 UCI Track Cycling World Championships", have been successfully held in the venue. Hong Kong is the second city in Asia after Japan in 1990 to host the Championships. The event was highly praised by the UCI and athletes from all over the world.

- 11) Referring to paragraphs 2.25(b) and 2.30(b), Consultant X sought the advice of the CAHK between 2008 and 2009 on the design of the cycling track in the HKV. Did Consultant X communicate with the CAHK to learn about its requirements for the cycling track, so as to ascertain that the track could meet its training mode and practical needs (e.g. the track surface performance and the requirements for the cycling track needed to be enhanced beyond the UCI Category 1 standard)?

LCSD's Response

The HKV is the first ever indoor cycling facility built in Hong Kong that meets the international standards of the UCI. The construction of HKV was a new challenge to the LCSD, ArchSD, CAHK as well as the relevant stakeholders such as consultants and contractors. All major stakeholders had tried their best at the early planning and design stages to draw up the design parameters to suit the objectives and specifications. Consultant X, in conjunction with the LCSD and ArchSD, had sought the advice of the CAHK on the provisions and operational requirements of the HKV, which confirmed the design parameter complied with the then latest requirements of the UCI for homologation with a Category 1 standard for hosting world-class track cycling events, and met the training mode and practical needs of the HKC Team. After the completion of the project, inspection was conducted and accepted by government works departments, as well as homologated by the UCI as Category 1 standard venue.

However, after the cycling track performance tests and the Hong Kong International Track Cup, some professional cyclists (both local and foreign teams) provided constructive comments on the performance of the track surface. The LCSD considered that the above professional advice was worth pursuing and that the track surface enhancement work should be carried out as early as possible to improve the track surface performance, better suit the training mode and practical needs of the HKC Team in future and support the long-term development of the sports of track cycling in Hong Kong. Since the suggestions of the enhancement arose after the test ride on the cycling track, it was not possible to incorporate them into the user requirements at the early planning and design stages.

- 12) According to Table 4 of paragraph 2.36, it was indicated in the as-built records of December 2013 that the net operational floor area (NOFA) of the control room was 123 square meters (m²). However, the accommodation for the control room was 10 m² in September 2009, representing a variation by over 1 130%. What are the reasons?

LCSD's Response

It was new challenge for the LCSD, ArchSD and CAHK to construct the first ever indoor cycling facility in Hong Kong that met international standards for world-class cycling training and competitions. As all stakeholders had no practical experience in the planning, design, layout and construction of a velodrome for staging world-class track cycling events, and did not have sufficient sensitivity, colleagues were not aware of the changes in the distribution of the facilities in the building upon handing over of the venue, resulting in some deviation from the originally approved Schedule of Accommodations (SoA).

The two control rooms located at the upper second floor of the HKV have a total net floor area of 123 square meters, which deviates from the originally approved SoA. However, during the major international competitions (including the 2015/16 UCI Track Cycling World Cup and the 2017 UCI Track Cycling World Championships), both control rooms became an important auxiliary facility for the competitions, i.e. (i) as the audio and video control centre for the event; and (ii) as a standby and monitoring centre for various works departments and the police to facilitate effective crowd management and event control. Our

experience gained from these events reveals that the current net floor area of the control rooms is just adequate to meet the actual operational needs in the organization of large-scale events.

LCSD will follow the recommendations of the Audit Commission, in collaboration with ArchSD to resubmit the latest SoA as well as relevant information in the changes in the NOFA of accommodation to the Property Vetting Committee (PVC) for approval. Furthermore, the LCSD will remind all relevant sections and district offices to ensure that subsequent changes to an approved SoA should be properly approved by the PVC in accordance with the requirements of the Accommodation Regulations.

- 13) Referring to paragraph 2.37(b), why was the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), as the user department of the HKV, not aware of or specifically informed of the extent of accommodation changes of the HKV?

LCSD's Response

The LCSD is the management department of the HKV. Upon taking over the HKV, the venue staff would pay special attention to check whether the venue had sufficient space according to the actual daily operational needs and the requirements for holding large-scale events. In fact, it is necessary to ensure that all supporting facilities are built up to international standards for hosting large-scale international events. It is equally important to meet ever-increasing demands on the sports facilities and to follow the latest government policies (i.e. provision of baby care facilities etc.). When taking over a new venue, the focus of the LCSD is mainly on the adequacy of space provision or equipment, and is not aware that some of the rooms exceeded the approved area listed in the SoA.

The LCSD will, in collaboration with ArchSD, resubmit the SoA as well as relevant information to the PVC for approval. Furthermore, the LCSD will remind all relevant sections and district offices to ensure that subsequent changes to an approved SoA are properly approved by the PVC in accordance with the requirements of the Accommodation Regulations.

Part 3: Operation and Maintenance of Facilities

- 14) Referring to paragraph 3.20(a), the conditions of some damaged fixtures had remained unchanged as observed in the Audit's two site visits conducted on 28 June and 9 August 2018 respectively. However, the relevant damaged fixtures were not recorded in the occurrence book of the LCSD's venue staff. In this connection, is there any negligence on the part of the venue staff?

LCSD's Response

The Audit Report showed a photo of a damaged garden bench at Velodrome Park with a protruding screw on a broken backrest. The photo was taken on 9.8.2018. However, it did not imply that repair works of the defective bench had been outstanding since June 2018. In fact, well before receiving the referral from the Audit Commission, venue staff had occasionally noticed defective backrest on some benches in the park. The venue staff always removed the broken wooden slats as well as the exposed screws promptly, and then wrapped up the damaged parts of the benches with thick adhesive tape. As the potential hazard of the defects had been removed and the benches were still suitable for public use, the venue staff did not record these defective items in the occurrence book. Notwithstanding that, the venue staff had subsequently requested the works department to make good all similar defective fixtures.

During routine inspection, the venue staff generally focused on defective items directly related to public safety and functional defects of the facilities. Some minor problems associated with the appearance of the facility like defective painting as mentioned in the report might be overlooked. The report mentioned that the paint of some columns at the amphitheatre had already peeled off. The venue staff regarded this defect as normal wear and tear and a minor improvement work without urgency and had not arranged for repair work promptly. In this connection, the LCSD has immediately reminded the venue staff that all defective facilities should be recorded and followed up in a timely manner to ensure the quality of the services.

Moreover, in response to the recommendations of Audit Commission, the LCSD has divided the venue security work into different zones in accordance with the actual operation arrangement and usage pattern of the Velodrome Park. Security

guards are required to inspect the facilities in the respective zones during daily patrol. They should report any damage to the duty officer immediately and properly record the details. The venue staff also need to cordon off the damaged facilities properly and timely request the relevant works department to carry out repairs work.

- 15) According to paragraph 3.21(c), the mills barrier cordoned off for repair inside the Velodrome Park was removed by a user during nighttime of 6 August 2018. However, the venue staff did not cordon off the equipment again until the inspection on 9 August. Why was the follow-up action taken only two days later if the venue staff conducted daily inspections?

LCSD's Response

According to the venue record, the maintenance contractor fixed the defective fitness equipment in the afternoon of 8 August and repainted the facilities. Whilst allowing the wet paint to dry completely, the venue staff cordoned off the facility on 9 August and then opened the facility for public use.

Part 4: Usage of Facilities

- 16) According to Note 1 of Table 12 under paragraph 4.12, the arena and the cycling track of the HKV could be used concurrently when conducting badminton activities in the arena which would not interfere with the cyclists' training at the cycling track. In this connection, please advise whether the arena can also be opened to schools, organisations or the public for use during the training sessions of the HKC Team.

LCSD's Response

The HKV has a core mission to provide a local, stable and quality training base for the HKC Team and to develop the sports of track cycling in Hong Kong. The HKC Team normally conducts cycling training six days a week (Monday to Saturday) from 9 am to 6 pm at HKV. The elite training at the HKV will highly depend on race schedules and on-the-spot physical condition of individual

athletes. Moreover, some intensive practising programmes and trainings on race strategies are conducted in a closed-door mode. There is genuine need to allow training flexibility for the HKC Team in using the track having regard to the core mission and unique roles of HKV. There is therefore no priority booking by school or organisations for the use of the arena during the training sessions of the HKC Team. However, members of the public can make on-the-spot bookings or advance bookings of the remaining arena facilities (i.e. badminton courts) within 10 days from the current date on a first-come-first-served basis

The LCSD will continue to work closely with the major stakeholders, such as the CAHK, the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the Sai Kung District Sports Association and other sports organisations to promote the usage of facilities in the HKV.

- 17) Referring to paragraph 4.13(c), will the LCSD upgrade the equipment in the activity rooms in the HKV, such as providing mobile mirrors and mobile public address equipment as generally provided in the activity rooms in other government sports centres, with a view to enhancing the utilisation of the activity rooms in the HKV?

LCSD's Response

The LCSD will continue to work through various improvement works to enhance the usage of facilities in the future. Apart from organising more recreational and sports activities, the LCSD will make good use of existing venue facilities and improve the ancillary facilities of activity rooms such as provision of movable mirrors and portable sound system. The LCSD hopes that whilst providing a high quality competition venue to organise major track cycling competitions, more members of the public would be attracted to use other recreational facilities in the HKV.