

**For discussion on
11 November 2019**

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Measures to Support Hong Kong Football Development

Purpose

The Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs (the Panel) has invited members of the public to express their views on football development in Hong Kong. This paper seeks to outline the Government's measures to support football development.

Hong Kong Football Association

2. The Hong Kong Football Association (HKFA) was established in 1914. It is a member of the Federation Internationale de Football Association, the Asian Football Confederation and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China. It is responsible for promoting football development in Hong Kong and the selection of athletes to participate in international events. Like all other "national sports associations" (NSAs), the HKFA is an independent legal entity with full autonomy to run its affairs. The HKFA's Board of Director is responsible for the HKFA's governance and consists of both club-linked and non-club-linked Directors. The HKFA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the daily operation of the HKFA and is appointed by the HKFA's Board of Directors. Other main managerial staff of the HKFA include the General Secretary, Head of Corporate Governance, Head Coach and Technical Director.

3. It is within the HKFA's purview to set the priorities and objectives in the promotion and development of football in Hong Kong. The HKFA organises local leagues and international matches, as well as selects and supervises Hong Kong Teams (including Men's Team, Women's Team, Youth Team and Futsal Team) that play in international competitions. At present, the HKFA has set up various levels of leagues, among which the Hong Kong Premier League (HKPL) is the only professional league and is participated by 10 clubs in the 2019/20 football season. The amateur leagues include the First, Second and Third Divisions of men's football, and the leagues for women's football, youth football and futsal. The HKFA organises various cups including the FA Cup, the Hong Kong Community Cup, the Sapling Cup, the Senior Shield, and the Guangdong-Hong Kong Cup. The HKFA also runs a number of community programmes to promote football including the Youth Football Development Programme, the HKPL Junior Programme and the School Sports

Programme. These programmes attracted over 67 000 participants in 2018-19.

Sports Subvention Scheme

4. In support of the development of local football, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has all along been providing recurrent subvention under the Sports Subvention Scheme to the HKFA for the development and promotion of local football. In 2019-20, the LCSD's subvention to HKFA was \$19.2 million, three quarters of which was used to fund the HKFA's programmes to develop and promote football, such as league matches, training of the Hong Kong Teams and school promotion programmes. These programmes attract a total of around 70 000 participants every year. The remaining quarter of the subvention was mainly used for funding part of the HKFA's operating expenditure.

District Football Funding Scheme

5. To help upgrade the standard of play in local leagues and enhance district-level enthusiasm for football, in 2002 the LCSD helped the HKFA establish 18 District Football Teams, which represent the District Councils (DCs) and compete in the HKFA leagues. Apart from encouraging DCs to recognise and provide funding to their football teams, the LCSD provides each team with facilities free of charge for training use. In the past decade, District Football Teams have taken root in local districts and have made positive contribution to football development in Hong Kong.

6. Since the 2011/12 football season, the Homes Affairs Bureau (HAB) has implemented the District Football Funding Scheme (DFFS) to provide funding support to 18 district-based teams with the aim of improving their performance and governance. The funding can be used to cover expenses in coaching, transportation, equipment and administrative staff, among other areas. The level of funding for each team is determined by the HKFA league in which it is participating in. In the 2019/20 football season, the levels of funding for teams playing in the Hong Kong Premier League, First Division, Second Division and Third Division are \$1.65 million, \$550,000, \$385,000 and \$330,000 respectively. Currently, there are three District Football Teams participating in the HKPL, six in the First Division, six in the Second Division and three in the Third Division. In the 2018-19 football season, Tai Po Football Club won the HKPL championship and was the first ever District Football Team to attain this achievement. The results of each District Football Team in the 2018/19 football season are at **Annex 1**.

Project Phoenix and Five-Year Strategic Plan

7. In 2010, the HAB allocated funding to the HKFA for it to appoint a

“Change Agent” to formulate a development plan that would set out a framework for implementing the recommendations of the Government’s consultancy study. The Change Agent’s report, entitled “Project Phoenix” set out a list of tasks for the HKFA to implement in areas such as governance, management structure, development and business planning. In 2011-12 to 2013-14, we earmarked a maximum of \$20 million annually for allocation to the HKFA for the implementation of the recommendations in the Project Phoenix. From November 2011 to March 2015¹, the total amount of funding we provided to the HKFA for this purpose amounted to \$55.45 million. Meanwhile, in May 2010, we set up the Football Task Force (FTF), chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs comprising members from the sports and other sectors, to advise on and monitor the implementation of the related measures. In mid-2014, the FTF conducted an overall review of the Project Phoenix.

8. Following the Project Phoenix, the HKFA presented the Five-Year Strategic Plan as a logical and progressive way forward for further development of football, based on the groundwork laid under the Project Phoenix. The FTF considered that the Five-Year Strategic Plan would cover all age groups with a view to nurturing local footballers with talents to improve the quality of the sport locally and raising our overall standard in football. To enable the HKFA to deliver the Five-Year Plan, its administrative and technical capability developed under the Project Phoenix should be retained. The Sports Commission (SC) supported the FTF’s suggestion. Having accepted the recommendations by the SC and FTF, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, the HAB decided to allocate a maximum of \$25 million annually to the HKFA for the implementation of the Five-Year Strategic Plan. The review outcome of Project Phoenix and details of the Five-Year Strategic Plan are set out in our report to the Panel in January 2015 through LC Paper No. CB(2)543/14-15(03).

9. We completed the mid-term review on the HKFA’s Five-Year Strategic Plan in mid-2018² and reported the related outcome and recommendations to the Panel in July 2018 through LC Paper No. CB(2)1836/17-18(01). The review findings indicate that the performance of the HKFA in various areas has improved, including governance and

¹ The Football Task Force agreed in August 2014 to continue to allocate funding to the HKFA until 31 March 2015 so that it could meet the Project Phoenix-related contractual obligations.

² Apart from reviewing the report submitted by the HKFA, the FTF and its Secretariat had collected views of the stakeholders through the following channels –

- (a) meeting with members of the HKFA Board, subvented staff and representatives of football clubs and teams;
- (b) setting up of four focus groups comprising coaches, players, fans and media/commentators respectively to gain some insights on their views on the performance of the HKFA and the state of development of football in Hong Kong; and
- (c) sending out questionnaires to people in the football community, including coaches, referees, administrators and players at all levels to collect their views on matters covered by the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

organizational development, grassroots and youth football, girls and women's football, football curriculum, coach development and referee development. In particular, the number of participants of women's football programmes exceeded 3 000 and the number of participants of the futsal league exceeded 19 000, both reaching the final targets of the Five-Year Strategic Plan ahead of schedule. However, the performance of the HKFA in some areas still required improvement. As mentioned in our report to the Panel in May 2019 through LC Paper No. CB(2)1500/18-19(05), the HKFA is working on the following improvement measures to address these areas –

	Areas requiring improvement	HKFA's improvement measures
1.	Performance of the Hong Kong Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the new Football Training Centre to enhance the training of the Hong Kong Teams • Cooperate with clubs to better monitor the players' physical and competition states • Strengthen the scouting of potential players • Enhance the training of young players and closely monitor the performance of the junior teams
2.	Hong Kong Premier League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the education to clubs in relation to club licensing • Cooperate with the LCSD to enhance the match-day experience • Continue to allocate resources to prevent match fixing
3.	Communication and relationship with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise a marketing and communications plan • Strengthen communication with clubs and players • Use social media more effectively
4.	Reliance on public funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider developing activities and products etc. with commercial value to increase its commercial revenue • Continue to actively attract sponsorships from companies and other forms of support

10. We are currently conducting the final review of the HKFA Five-Year Strategic Plan. We have received the views of many stakeholders. Also, the HKFA is preparing a new five-year strategic plan to formulate the future directions and initiatives on football development.

Public Football Venues

11. Apart from the provision of funding support, the Government

provides public football pitches to support the development of football. Currently, the LCSD provides 61 11-a-side turf pitches³, 21 7-a-side turf pitches and 234 hard-surface pitches of 5-a-side or 7-a-side for members of the public to play football. In 2018, the average utilisation rate of the LCSD's turf pitches is 72%. Information on the locations and hiring fees of public football pitches can be found on the LCSD's website. The HKFA is given priority to reserve venues for football training and matches with the subvention provided. In the 2019/20 football season, the LCSD allocated 18 football pitches to the HKFA for HKPL matches and related club training. The related information is at **Annex 2**.

12. We will continue to increase the supply of football pitches. Projects under the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreational Facilities that are currently under construction will provide four 11-a-side turf pitches, two 7-a-side turf pitches, three 7-a-side hard-surfaced pitches and four 5-a-side hard-surfaced pitches. In addition, we will enhance two 11-a-side turf pitches and two 7-a-side hard-surface pitches, and reprovide one 7-a-side hard-surfaced pitch and three 5-a-side hard-surfaced pitches. Relevant projects are set out at **Annex 3**.

Other Football Venues

13. To increase the football training venues, the HKFA, with the HAB's policy support, was allowed to rent a 12-hectare land at the Tseung Kwan O Landfill from the Environmental Protection Department for the construction of the Football Training Centre (FTC). The construction cost was sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The FTC is comprised of three standard-sized natural turf pitches, three standard-sized artificial turf pitches, a hard-surfaced futsal pitch and related auxiliary facilities. The FTC is used as the training base of the Hong Kong Teams. It enables the HKFA to implement various development plans and community football activities and is also made available for use by organisations and members of the public. The FTC has been opened for the use of the Hong Kong Teams and clubs since August 2018 and the use by the public since March 2019. A bird's eye view of the Football Training Centre is at **Annex 4**.

14. In addition, some sports organisations, such as the Jockey Club Kitchee Centre (the Kitchee Centre), the South China Athletic Association, the Hong Kong Football Club and the Hong Kong Rugby Union, are operating football pitches on rented government sites on a private recreational lease or Short Term Tenancy. The football pitches of the Kitchee Centre serve as a football training venue for various age groups and is open for public rental⁴.

³ Turf pitches cover natural turf and artificial turf pitches.

⁴ According to the tenancy signed, the relevant operators are required to make available a portion of the operation time of the facility for public booking. For example, the Kitchee Centre has set aside 30% of

The artificial turf pitch of the Hong Kong Football Club is used to host the HKFA First and Second Division Leagues matches, and could be rented for use by relevant NSAs. The rugby pitches in King's Park Sports Ground and Tin Shui Wai of the Hong Kong Rugby Union also serve as a training venue for local football clubs (such as Eastern Long Lions of the HKPL), in addition to rugby training and competition.

Jockey Club HKFA Five-Year Football Development Programme

15. To complement funding support from the Government, the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) has been supporting local football development directly through its Charities Trust. Over the past few years, the HKJC has sponsored major football development plans, including the Jockey Club Youth Football Development Programme co-organised by the HKFA and the LCSD since 2015-16, which attracted over 27 000 participants in 2018-19. In 2015-16 to 2019-20, the HKJC sponsored the HKFA Five-Year Football Development Programme jointly held by the HKJC and the HKFA with an average yearly subvention of around \$24 million. This programme covers a wide range of activities, including grassroots football, women football, youth football, futsal, referee training, coach training, and sports science support services. The HKJC also works closely with the community and sports organisations to organise football activities for grassroots, children, elderly and coaches at elite, school and community levels.

Advice Sought

16. As mentioned in paragraph 10 above, we are conducting the final review of the HKFA Five-Year Strategic Plan. We welcome public views on the development of football in Hong Kong.

**Home Affairs Bureau
November 2019**

Results of District Football Teams in the 2018/19 Football Season

League	District Football Team	Result in the 2018/19 Football Season
Hong Kong Premier League	Tai Po	Champion
	Southern	2 nd Runner-up
	Yuen Long	7 th
First Division	Eastern	5 th
	Sha Tin	6 th
	Central & Western	9 th
	Wong Tai Sin	11 th
Second Division	North	Champion
	Sham Shui Po	1 st Runner-up
	Kwun Tong	2 nd Runner-up
	Tuen Mun	6 th
	Yau Tsim Mong	9 th
	Wan Chai	10 th
	Kowloon City	11 th
Third Division	Kwai Tsing	1 st Runner-up
	Tsuen Wan	7 th
	Islands	8 th
	Sai Kung	11 th

Public Football Venues Allocated to the Hong Kong Football Association for Hong Kong Premier League (HKPL) Matches and related Club Training by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in the 2019/20 Football Season

	Public Football Venue	Assigned Use
1.	Tai Po Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Tai Po
2.	Mong Kok Stadium (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Southern and Kitchee
3.	Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Eastern
4.	Hong Kong Stadium (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of HK Pegasus
5.	Yuen Long Stadium (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Yuen Long
6.	Sham Shui Po Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Lee Man
7.	Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Happy Valley
8.	Tuen Mun Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Home venue of Rangers
9.	Kwong Fuk Park (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of Tai Po
10.	Aberdeen Sports Ground (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of Southern
11.	Kowloon Tsai Park (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of HK Pegasus and supplementary training venue of Eastern and Happy Valley
12.	Tin Yip Road Park (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of Yuen Long
13.	Po Tsui Park (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of Lee Man
14.	Kowloon Bay Park (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of Happy Valley and supplementary training venue of HK Pegasus
15.	Shek Kip Mei Park (artificial turf pitch)	Training venue of Rangers
16.	Happy Valley Recreation Ground (artificial turf pitch)	Supplementary training venue of Lee Man
17.	Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Stand-by venue of the HKPL
18.	Tsing Yi Sports Ground (natural turf pitch)	Stand-by venue of the HKPL

**Projects under Construction or Included in the
Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities**

	Construction	Enhancement	Reprovisioning
11-a-side pitch	<u>4 (natural/artificial turf)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kai Tak Sports Park (2 <u>football</u> pitches) • Football-cum-Rugby Pitch with Public Vehicle Park in Area 33, Tai Po* • Sports Ground and Open Space in Area 16, Tuen Mun* 	<u>2 (natural turf)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of Yuen Long Stadium* • Improvement of Tsuen Wan Riviera Park and Tsuen Wan Park* 	-
7-a-side pitch	<u>2 (artificial turf)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District open space adjoining public housing development at Anderson Road • Open Space at Hoi Fan Road, Tai Kok Tsui * <u>3 (hard-surfaced)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space in Area 6, Tuen Mun *[@] • Sports Centre, Community Hall and Football Pitches in Area 1, Tai Po (2 <u>football</u> pitches) 	<u>2 (hard-surfaced)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Facilities with Public Vehicle Park in Tung Tau Industrial Area, Yuen Long*[^] 	<u>1 (hard-surfaced)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprovisioning of Tsun Yip Street Playground facilities to Hong Ning Road Park and Ngau Tau Kok Fresh Water Service Reservoir
5-a-side pitch	<u>4 (hard-surfaced)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space in Area 6, Tuen Mun (2 5-a-side football pitches)*[@] • Open Space in Area 17, Tuen Mun * • Government Complex in Area 103, Ma On Shan *[#] 	-	<u>3 (hard-surfaced)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of Hoi Bun Road Park and adjacent area* • Improvement of Lam Wah Street Playground and adjacent area* • Sports Centre, 5-a-side Soccer Pitch and Public Library Facilities at Northwest Kowloon Reclamation Site 6, Sham Shui Po

- * Projects under “Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities”
- # In addition to being a 5-a-side football pitch, its multi-purpose arena can also be used as one handball court or two basketball courts or two volleyball courts or eight badminton courts
- @ The multi-purpose hard-surfaced court can be used as a 7-a-side football pitch cum two 5-a-side football pitches cum 2 handball courts.
- ^ One of the 7-a-side football pitches could also be used as two 5-a-side football pitches.

Bird's Eye View of the Football Training Centre

