

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1317/19-20(02)

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Panel on Home Affairs

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 July 2020**

Football development in Hong Kong

Purpose

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

Background

Hong Kong Football Association

2. The 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 to 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 (2015 to 2020) 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.

7. At its meeting on 20 July 2018, the Panel was briefed on the findings and recommendations of the Mid-term Review of the Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020) conducted by FTF. Members were informed that as at 30 September 2017, HKFA had commenced work on over half of the targeted items under the Five-year Strategic Plan. Though some of the interim performance indicators could not be met, HKFA was confident that it would complete most of the work in relation to the targets and achieve the performance indicators by the end of the five-year period. A summary of HKFA's achievements of the performance indicators and targets and its work progress is in **Appendix II**.

¹ An executive summary of the Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020) is at Annex 3 to LC Paper No. CB(2)543/14-15(03).

8. The review findings indicated that the performance of HKFA in some areas still required improvement, including: (i) performance of the Hong Kong representative teams; (ii) development of the Hong Kong Premier League ("HKPL"); (iii) communication and relationship with stakeholders and; (iv) reliance on public funding. At its meeting on 27 May 2019, the Panel discussed promotion of sports development in Hong Kong including football development. Members noted that HKFA was implementing various improvement measures to address the above areas of concern (**Appendix III**). The Panel further held a meeting on 3 December 2019 to receive public views on "football development in Hong Kong".

Discussions held by the Panel

Targets and indicators for the Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020)

Development and promotion of football

9. Some members considered that while the Government should continue to provide adequate resources to HKFA for implementing the Five-year Strategic Plan, HKFA should expand its sources of funding as well, such as by soliciting more commercial sponsorship from the business sector, so as to enhance funding support for the operation of football teams. At the meeting on 9 December 2019, the Panel passed a motion urging the Government to introduce an additional tax allowance and increase the tax allowance rate for enterprises sponsoring local football (see **Appendix IV**). Members further considered that measures should be taken to boost the interests of members of the public in HKPL, and the Administration should consider subsidizing tickets of HKPL matches and arranging free live television broadcasts of these matches. There was also a view that football clubs should be provided with a stronger financial incentive (e.g. increasing the prize money) to participate in HKPL.

10. The Administration advised that the provision of funding support for the implementation of HKFA's Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020) had demonstrated the Government's commitment to supporting the development of football in Hong Kong. Apart from the annual funding of \$25 million earmarked for the Five-Year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020), government resources had been allocated to football development through various funding schemes, e.g. the Sports Subvention Scheme and the District Football Funding Scheme. The Administration would continue to encourage commercial sponsorship for football clubs and matches. HKFA was also requested to review the effectiveness of its marketing strategy and identify ways that would boost the interests of members of the public in HKPL.

11. Some members suggested that the Administration should conduct a study on the feasibility of legalizing betting on local football matches so that the revenue thus generated could be used for promoting the development of local football. The Administration advised that it did not encourage gambling in society and it had no plan for legalizing betting on local football matches at the present stage. Moreover, the Administration considered that football betting did not necessarily lead to the promotion of football development in Hong Kong.

12. Some members considered that the development of high quality local players was pivotal to football development. These members suggested that the remuneration and career prospects of football players should be improved so as to make playing football a viable career option for the youth. Some members took the view that more high-level overseas players who were at the later stage of their career should be recruited to HKPL teams, and a more systematic scheme for subsidizing local players to receive overseas training should be established in order to facilitate the development of local players. Members also raised concern about the sufficiency of coaches and referees in Hong Kong, and enquired about the progress of establishing a professional footballers association.

13. The Administration advised that there had been substantial increases in HKPL players' salaries in recent years. HKFA was formulating plans in the context of the next Five-year Strategic Plan to prepare and support football players to pursue a second career after retirement. Furthermore, following the discussion between the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB")/HKFA and the Chinese Football Association ("CFA"), Hong Kong players had been allowed to play for football clubs in the CFA Super League or the CFA China League 1 which offered attractive remuneration packages to local players. 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. As regards the establishment of a professional footballers association, the Administration advised that the proposal was being followed up by HKFA.

Promotion of futsal

14. Members noted that increasing the number of participants in HKFA's futsal programmes was one of the targets and performance indicators under the Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020). Some members considered that futsal 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 more futsal pitches which met the international standards, e.g. by renovating the existing five-a-side pitches.

15. HKFA concurred with members' view that development of futsal should receive more attention and resources. HKFA undertook that it would promote futsal across the education sector and organize futsal competitions among schools and at the community level.

Improvement of facilities

16. A number of members expressed concern that the development of football in Hong Kong had been hindered by the shortage of public football venues and urged the Administration to build more football venues for both professional training and public use. These members considered that more 11-a-side natural turf pitches, instead of artificial turf pitches, should be built to facilitate professional football training. Some members further suggested that the Administration should streamline the booking arrangements and procedures for allocation of football pitches under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") and combat speculation activities on venue booking.

17. The Administration advised that it would continue to increase the supply of football pitches, including renovating existing pitches into futsal pitches as appropriate. The Administration advised that it had been pressing ahead with the Five-year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities, which would develop new or improve existing football pitches in various districts. Besides, under the current arrangement between LCSD and HKFA, each HKPL team already had a designated training pitch.

18. At the meeting on 9 December 2019, the Panel passed a motion urging the Government to introduce the principle of stakeholder engagement in the planning and management of football venues, and to set up consultative committees with broad stakeholder involvement under HAB and LCSD respectively. The wording of the motion is in **Appendix V**.

Recent developments

19. The Audit Commission has recently conducted a review of the management of funding for sports development through the Arts and Sport Development Fund (Sports Portion), including the funding provided to HKFA for the development of local football through the implementation of the "Project Phoenix" and the Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020). The findings of the review are set out in Chapter 1 of the Report No. 74 of the Director of Audit on the results of value for money audits ("the Report") released in April 2020. The Public Accounts Committee ("PAC") considered the relevant part of the Report

and invited representatives of the Administration and HKFA to attend its public hearings held on 16 May, 5 June and 8 June 2020 to provide information to PAC.

20. The Panel will be briefed on the final review of the HKFA's Five-year Strategic Plan (2015 to 2020) and on the new Strategic Plan prepared by HKFA at the next meeting on 13 July 2020.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 July 2020

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.

Comparison of Performance Targets and Indicators

I. Performance Targets

Performance Target(s)	Target for 2017-18	Position as at September 2017	Remarks
<i>Hong Kong Football Curriculum</i>			
(a) Review the curriculum with a view to producing a revised version for implementation	Reviewed the curriculum	The curriculum has been revised to include additional information on “golden age” coaching.	Target met.
<i>Coach Education</i>			
(b) Review the courses with a view to producing revised versions for implementation	Reviewed the courses	The courses were continually under review with changes made as and when required by the Coach Education Manager and Technical Director	Target met.
<i>Football Development Plan</i>			
(c) Introduce a football development plan	N.A.	N.A.	The development plan has been in place since the 2015/16 season.
<i>Grassroots and Youth Football</i>			
(d) Increase the number of programme participants	15,000	15,931	Target exceeded by 6%.
<i>Girls and Women Football</i>			
(e) Increase the number of programme participants	2,770	3,140	Target exceeded by 13%.
(f) Introduce representative age group teams	N.A.	N.A.	Age group teams have been set up in or before 2017.

Performance Target(s)	Target for 2017-18	Position as at September 2017	Remarks
Futsal			
(g) Increase the number of programme participants	13,000	19,086	Target exceeded by 47%
Coaching			
(h) Increase the number of qualified coaches registered with HKFA -			
‘D’ Licence coaches	350	292	Below target by 17% Improvement observed with additional 28 coaches as at March 2018 (still below target by 9%).
‘C’ Licence coaches	324	270	Below target by 17% Improvement observed with additional 31 coaches as at March 2018 (still below target by 7%).
‘B’ Licence coaches	118	93	Below target by 21%
‘A’ Licence coaches	45	27	Below target by 40% Improvement observed with additional 3 coaches as at March 2018 (still below target by 33%).
‘Pro’ Licence coaches	N.A.	6	
Youth Football Leader certificate Level 1 and 2 holders	1,102	144	Below target by 87% Level 1 and 2 certificates are phasing out due to restructuring of the coaching course system which will be fully implemented in 2018-19 season.
Refereeing			
(i) Increase the number of referees –			
<u>Referee Development</u>			
FIFA Referee	6	7	Target exceeded by 17%
FIFA Assistant Referee	8	8	Target met
Women FIFA Referee	2	1	Below target by 50% Promotion process in progress and more qualified referees are expected to be promoted in the

Performance Target(s)	Target for 2017-18	Position as at September 2017	Remarks
			coming season.
Women FIFA Assistant Referee	2	1	Below target by 50% Promotion process in progress and more qualified referees are expected to be promoted in the coming season.
Class 1	45	33	Below target by 27% Promotion process in progress and more qualified referees are expected to be promoted in the coming season.
Class 2	55	41	Below target by 25% Promotion process in progress and more qualified referees are expected to be promoted in the coming season.
Class 3	100	76	Below target by 24% Promotion process in progress and more qualified referees are expected to be promoted in the coming season.
New	120	200	Target exceeded by 67%
<u>Assessors and Instructors</u>			
Referees instructors	14	21	Target exceeded by 50%
Referees fitness instructors	4	6	Target exceeded by 50%
Referees assessors	40	46	Target exceeded by 15%

Performance Target(s)	Target for 2017-18	Position as at September 2017	Remarks
Marketing			
(j) Increase sponsorship and advertising gross revenue (\$'000) (cash & product in kind)	10,580	9,642	Below target by 9%
(k) Conduct longitudinal independently supervised match day surveys of spectators, based on a minimum of 500 questionnaires	N.A.	N.A.	
Governance and Management			
(l) Arrange for the election of a minimum of four independent (non club-linked) directors to the board of directors of the Grantee in the elections to be held	N.A.	N.A.	Five independent directors were elected to the Board in 2015-16.
(m) Adopt a new constitution to reflect AFC/FIFA regulations and review the constitution bi-annually thereafter	Review the constitution	On-going review is underway	Target met. The constitution is under review. After completion of the review, HKFA will submit the final version to the Board for approval before passing it to FIFA for review and comment.

II. Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator(s)	Target for 2017-18	Position as at Sep 2017	Remarks
<i>Hong Kong Premier League (HKPL)</i>			
(n) Average attendance per HKPL match (by football season)	1,500	1,213	Below target by 19%. Attendance on some match days was affected by inclement weather. Joint promotion activities with clubs will be carried out to boost up the attendance. Besides, the School Football Experience Programme has been launched to promote HKPL at school level and provide them with opportunity to attend HKPL matches.
<i>Football Facilities</i>			
(o) Preparation of a plan for the implementation of a new football facilities strategy	Produced the plan	Draft plan is available	Below target. The new football facilities strategy is largely based on the development of the Football Training Centre (FTC) of which the construction is expected to be completed in 2018. HKFA is finalising the management and operation plan of the FTC.
<i>Website Hits</i>			
(p) Increase average daily website hits of HKFA website	520,000	294,500	Below target by 43%.
<i>HKFA Fans Database</i>			
(q) Increase number of fans registered in HKFA fan database	26,000	28,300	Target exceeded by 9%.

Performance Indicator(s)	Target for 2017-18	Position as at Sep 2017	Remarks
<i>HKFA Membership</i>			
(r) Expand the membership of HKFA	90	73	Below target by 19%. Ten new non-voting members were approved by the Board in October 2017 and additional new membership applications are under processing.

Appendix III

	Areas requiring improvement	HKFA's improvement measures
1.	Performance of the Hong Kong Teams	<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

Source : Paper provided by the Administration for the Panel meeting on 27 May 2019 [LC Paper No. CB(2)1500/18-19(05)].

立法會CB(2)374/19-20(02)號文件
LC Paper No. CB(2)374/19-20(02)

民政事務委員會

在 2019 年 12 月 9 日的會議上
就 "香港足球發展" 通過的議案

稅務優惠推動足球發展

觀乎世界各地足球發展，商界參與必不可少，無奈現時商界贊助動機和誘因不足。本會要求政府對贊助足球運動（不限於足球運動）的企業，提供額外免稅額以及免稅比例，以支持足球運動發展。

動議人：陸頌雄議員, JP

(Translation)

Panel on Home Affairs

**Motion on "Football Development in Hong Kong"
passed at the meeting on 9 December 2019**

Introducing tax concessions to promote football development

As we can see, the engagement of the business sector is indispensable to the development of football across the globe. It is unfortunate that at present, the local business sector does not have sufficient motivations and incentives to provide sponsorships. This Panel requests the Government to introduce an additional tax allowance and increase the tax allowance rate for enterprises which sponsor the football sport (as well as other sports in addition to football), so as to support the football development.

Moved by: Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP

立法會CB(2)374/19-20(01)號文件
LC Paper No. CB(2)374/19-20(01)

民政事務委員會

在 2019 年 12 月 9 日的會議上
就 "香港足球發展" 通過的議案

為推動香港足球發展，要求政府在規劃及管理足球場地時引入持份者參與的原則，分別在民政局及康文署轄下成立有廣泛持份者參與的諮詢委員會。

動議人：區諾軒議員

(Translation)

Panel on Home Affairs

**Motion on "Football Development in Hong Kong"
passed at the meeting on 9 December 2019**

This Panel requests the Government to introduce the principle of stakeholder engagement in the planning and management of football venues and set up consultative committees with broad stakeholder involvement under the Home Affairs Bureau and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department respectively, so as to promote the development of football in Hong Kong.

Moved by: Hon AU Nok-hin

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

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	20.7.2018 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	5.12.2018	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 75 to 78
	27.3.2019	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 111 to 117
Panel on Home Affairs	27.5.2019 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	3.12.2019 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	9.12.2019 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	18.3.2020	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 118-130
Public Accounts Committee	16.5.2020, 5.6.2020 and 8.6.2020	Public hearings on "Management of funding for sports development through the Arts and Sport Development Fund (Sports Portion)" (Chapter 1) of the Director of Audit's Report No. 74