

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB135**

**(Question Serial No. 0594)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ( )

Programme: (4) Performing Arts

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

According to Programme (4), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has set the target usage rate of auditoria and arena of civic centres at 88%. As reflected by the actual usage rate of 98% in both 2018 and 2019, the demand for such venues is keen. Has the Department made any assessment on whether the newly built civic centre can alleviate the shortage of venues and lower the demand to the target usage rate? If not, will there be further plans to build more civic centres?

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)

Reply:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is committed to providing performance facilities pertinent to the needs of the general public and the arts and cultural sector to help sustain the vibrant development of local culture and arts in the long run. The East Kowloon Cultural Centre is currently under construction and scheduled for opening in 2022. It comprises a multi-purpose auditorium of 1 200 seats for large-scale events, a thrust stage theatre of 550 seats for medium-scale events and 3 studios with seating capacities ranging from 120 to 360 mainly for rehearsals and performances of music, dance and drama on a smaller scale. Another construction project under planning is the New Territories East Cultural Centre with pre-construction activities now underway and expected to complete in the first quarter of 2022. Major facilities proposed for the venue include a 1 400-seat auditorium, a 700-seat theatre, a 180-seat multi-purpose studio, and 4 rehearsal rooms. The LCSD will also continue to streamline its plans on facilities improvement or expansion works for its existing performance venues, like the facility upgrading of Tai Po Civic Centre for example. All these new and proposed works will be carried out with a view to helping alleviate the heavy demand for hiring facilities from the general public and the arts and cultural sector.

As the construction and operation of a performance venue involve considerable capital investment and long-term financial commitment, the Government has to prudently take into consideration a number of relevant factors on territory-wide basis in the planning of new performing arts facilities to ensure effective utilisation of resources. These factors include

the availability and usage rate of existing and proposed performing arts facilities in the territory, the overall planning of the district, views of the cultural sector, needs of the community at large, etc.

In addition, more performance venues are available as the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) has formally progressed to the operational phase with its Xiqu Centre, Art Park and Freespace opened last year. Other arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD will also be completed in the coming few years.

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