

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB445

(Question Serial No. 5800)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Recreation and Sports
Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Mrs. Betty FUNG)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question (Member Question No. 98):

Regarding the booking of recreation and sports venues in 2013-14, what measures have been taken by the Department to curb touting activities? Has the Department assessed the effectiveness of the measures? If so, how effective were they? What was the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has reviewed the booking and allocation arrangements for sports facilities and come up with a package of improvement measures for implementation in phases. Measures introduced in 2013 include: shortening the advance booking period for individual hirers from 30 days to ten days so as to reduce the time for reselling the user permits; revising the re-allocation arrangement due to inclement weather; and cancellation of the "standby" arrangements for turf football pitches following the completion of the six-month trial period from June to December 2013. To assess the impact and effectiveness of the trial scheme on cancellation of standby arrangement for turf football pitches, the LCSD conducted a study to collect the "no-show" data on soccer pitches. According to the data, the average no-show rates for natural and artificial turf pitches during the trial period dropped significantly to 4.7% and 5.6% respectively, as compared to 31% and 37% respectively during the period from July to September 2011. The data collected indicates that the new measures are effective in reducing the abuse of the standby arrangement, whilst ensuring that the usage of the facilities will not be adversely affected.

Apart from the above improvement measures, the LCSD will implement further enhancement measures in 2014 to tackle the "touting" problems. These include tightening the peak-time booking quota for individual users and the introduction of a penalty system targeting those who fail to take up the booked sessions without prior notification, abuse the concessionary arrangements or transfer user permits without authorisation. To prevent multiple registrations as Leisure Link patrons, thereby allowing booking in excess of the daily quota, all Leisure Link members will be required to re-register using their Hong Kong identity cards.

The expenditure involved in enhancing the Leisure Link System to implement the above improvement measures is about \$13 million in 2013-14.