

COMMUNITY SPORTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 32nd Meeting of the Community Sports Committee

Date: 14 November 2013 (Thursday)
Time: 10:30 am
Venue: Conference Room 401, 4/F, Leisure and Cultural Services Headquarters,
1-3 Pai Tau Street, Sha Tin, Hong Kong

Present: Mr TONG Wai-lun (Chairman)
Mr Daniel CHAM Ka-hung
Mr Henry CHAN Chi-chiu
Mr CHENG Shu-ming
Mr CHU King-yuen
Mrs Stella LAU KUN Lai-kuen
Ms LEE Ching-nga
Ms Peggy LEE Pik-yee
Mr Philip LI Wing-kuen
Mr LIU Ah-chuen
Mr Raphael TONG Tai-wai
Ms TUNG Kin-lei
Dr Simon YEUNG Sai-mo
Dr YUNG Shu-hang
Prof LEUNG Mei-lee

Department Representatives in Regular Attendance

Miss Olivia CHAN Yeuk-oi	(Representative from Leisure and Cultural Services Department)
Ms Sylvia LAO Kam-fung	(Representative from Home Affairs Bureau)
Dr Anne FUNG Yu-kei	(Representative from Department of Health)
Mr HO Chun-ip	(Representative from Education Bureau)
Ms Miriam POON Wai-ming	(Representative from Social Welfare Department)

Absent with Apologies

Mr David YIP Wing-shing	
Prof Stephen WONG Heung-sang	
Mrs Cecillia WONG LAM Siu-ling	
Mr George YIP Chi-wai	
Mr Dennis NGAN Yu-pang	(Representative from Home Affairs Department)

In Attendance

Mr Bobby CHENG Kam-wing	(Leisure and Cultural Services Department)
Ms Rebecca LOU Wai-yi	(Leisure and Cultural Services Department)
Ms Alice HEUNG Ching-yee	(Leisure and Cultural Services Department)

Secretary

Mr Simon LIU Wai-shing	(Leisure and Cultural Services Department)
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Opening Remarks

1.1 The Chairman welcomed all Members and representatives from various government departments to the meeting. He also welcomed Mr FONG Kai-leung of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), who had taken up the post of Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services). Mr FONG was unable to attend the meeting and was represented by Ms Miriam POON. On behalf of the Community Sports Committee (CSC), the Chairman expressed thanks to Mr LAM Ka-tai, former Assistant Director of the SWD, for his contribution to the CSC. The Chairman also extended welcome to Ms Sylvia LAO of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), who attended the meeting for the first time.

Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of Last Meeting of the CSC

2.1 The Secretariat had emailed the draft minutes of the 31st meeting to Members for comment on 29 October and received proposed amendments from the Education Bureau (EDB). The Chairman asked Members to refer to the proposed amendments and the revised minutes tabled at the meeting. As no further amendment was proposed at the meeting, the Chairman announced that the minutes of the 31st meeting were endorsed.

Item 2: Matters Arising

(i) Report on the Follow-up Action on the Physical Fitness Test for the Community

3.1 Mr Simon LIU invited Members to note the contents of the progress report tabled at the meeting and briefed them on some of the key points:

- (a) To provide the public with more recreation and sports facilities, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) completed the redevelopment of two swimming pool complexes, namely Kwun Tong Swimming Pool and Victoria Park Swimming Pool in 2013, with the Hong Kong Velodrome under construction in Tseung Kwan O expected to be completed by the end of 2013. With a view to encouraging private recreational lease (PRL) holders to open up their recreation and sports facilities for use by schools, youth organisations, welfare agencies and government departments, the HAB had uploaded onto its website details of approved Open-up Schemes in respect of such private recreation facilities for public reference.

- (b) To raise children’s awareness of physical exercise, the LCSD continued in its joint efforts with the EDB, the Department of Health (DH) and relevant national sports associations (NSAs) to organise workshops for enhancing kindergarten teachers’ knowledge of sports and physical exercise. To hammer home the message of regular exercise, the EDB produced related education television programmes for primary and secondary schools while the HAB commissioned the Radio Television Hong Kong to produce the TV series “Glamour of Sport – The Sport Arena The Road to Grow” which was broadcast starting 29 September. In addition, the LCSD, the EDB and the DH jointly launched the “School Sports Tour – iSmart Fitness Scheme” in September. The Scheme, which included seminars for parents and a five-month sports training programme for students, would end in April 2014.

- (c) To promote health information on diet and exercise, the LCSD was enhancing the interactive features of the dedicated webpage to provide more health information. The new edition of the CD-ROM on the “Healthy Exercise for All Campaign” included a simple aerobic workout for women to do at home. Also, the “Fitness Walking” mobile phone application was launched on the Sport For All Day held on 4 August 2013 to further promote the sport.

3.2 Mr Daniel CHAM commended the LCSD for its substantive and constructive work. Regarding the provision of more sports facilities, he suggested the HAB plan the scale of the facilities having regard to their principal use and users’ needs so that resources could be used effectively and genuine needs met. Mr Daniel

CHAM noted that the HAB had stated in the PRLs that holders had to open up their facilities for public use. He suggested the LCSD organise training courses and activities at these facilities so as to avoid criticism that the public could not gain access to facilities provided on government land which had been granted to private organisations at low land premiums.

3.3 Mr Bobby CHENG of the LCSD responded that the Government had increased the provision of resources for building or redeveloping sports facilities over the past five years. He said the LCSD would, at the planning stage of the building or redevelopment works, do its best to balance the needs of various parties when designing the facilities. Apart from meeting the standards required for international sporting events, the design of the facilities should be made suitable for public use. For instance, the facilities of the redeveloped Victoria Park Swimming Pool were suitable for general public swimming as well as international competitions. The Government hoped that the facilities under planning could benefit the majority of the public. It would not seek to build facilities of international standards without taking care of the needs of the general public. The Government would continue to seek the views of the District Councils (DCs) and members of the local community in resource, environmental and facility planning.

3.4 Mr Bobby CHENG said that, as explained by the HAB earlier on, it was stated in the PRLs that holders had to open up their facilities for public use. The LCSD would study the feasibility of organising activities at those venues for the benefit of more people.

3.5 Mr CHU King-yuen appreciated the commitment made by the LCSD in the progress report to provide more sports facilities. He opined that it was equally important to improve existing facilities and any action taken should be preventive rather than reactive to problems. Noting that the all-weather athletic track of Tai Po Sports Ground had aged and would gather puddles, he suggested the LCSD devise an improvement plan as soon as possible.

3.6 Mr Bobby CHENG of the LCSD responded that they attached equal importance to the improvement of existing recreation and sports facilities. The Department had an established plan and timetable for renovating or enhancing existing facilities to ensure conformity with the latest safety standards and a reasonable level of service quality. For example, it had started to plan the redevelopment and improvement of Yuen Long Stadium. The LCSD would follow up on the case of Tai Po Sports Ground.

3.7 Mr Raphael TONG proposed the requirement for PRL holders to submit reports on their schemes to open up facilities for public use (“open-up schemes”) and to conduct reviews and deliver enhancements every year.

3.8 Mr Bobby CHENG of the LCSD said that from what he knew, the HAB had already required that all PRL holders publish information on the opening-up of their facilities, such as the duration of opening and the relevant time slots for each month. In addition, a mechanism was in place to monitor if the stated standards were met. The LCSD would relay Members’ views to the HAB.

3.9 Mr HO Chun-ip of the EDB added that the HAB had enhanced the arrangements for eligible bodies, including schools under the purview of the EDB, to use the facilities. PRL holders should publish details about the opening-up of their facilities, such as the opening time slots and the relevant fees and charges. The EDB would issue circulars informing schools of the details about application and the use of the facilities. He pointed out that physical education teachers in schools had actively sought outside venues for new training courses. He suggested that PRL holders should do their best to make available to schools regular time slots for ongoing training.

3.10 Mr CHENG Shu-ming said that when considering opening up private recreational facilities for public use, the authorities should also take into account the specific nature of individual sports. Taking shooting as an example, he pointed out that legislation on firearms control restricted the use of firearms to designated venues unless prior application had been made to the Police Licensing Office. The complicated procedures involved in making applications also posed obstacles to the holding of activities. In addition, unlike other private recreational venues, gun club could not easily open up their venues for public use.

3.11 Prof LEUNG Mee-lee suggested that PRL holders should encourage the public more to use their facilities. Moreover, as most private recreational venues were open to public use from 10 am to 4 pm, women’s groups or schools could take the initiative to approach PRL holders in their neighbourhood for detailed information so that they might be able to maximise use of the facilities for the promotion of sports. Furthermore, the Government should help with the publicity. She also opined that in analysing the usage data of the facilities, attention should be given to the way PRL holders opened up their facilities, including the opening time slots and users.

3.12 Mr CHU King-yuen said that schools received information on PRL holders’ open-up schemes every year. He proposed that the Government could

allocate \$1.2 million to each district annually for district-based cultural activities, and dedicate the same amount of funding to activities for the promotion of Sport for All. He also suggested that training for the Hong Kong Games (HKG) should be ongoing rather than limited to a duration of four to six months before the games, and that additional resources be sought for the provision of ongoing training for and development of district teams. The Chairman agreed that, in the long run, the district teams should be kept and developed after the end of the HKG, subject to the availability of resources. This would also be beneficial to the long-term development of sports.

3.13 Mrs Stella LAU agreed with the suggestion that schools should take the initiative to apply for use of the sports facilities of private recreational venues to enhance sports training for their students.

3.14 Mr Henry CHAN agreed that resources should be sought for the development of community sports. For the past two years, the Commission on Youth had increased funding for the 18 districts to promote youth activities. He suggested that the districts could increase co-operation with NSAs. Elite athletes could be sent by the NSAs to take part in the Sport for All activities organised by the 18 districts throughout the year. This would not only further promote sports, but also strengthen NSAs' ties with the districts.

3.15 Mr Simon LIU of the LCSD said that the Government provided an annual funding of \$300 million to the 18 DCs for the implementation of community involvement projects. The provision included funds for recreation and sports activities regularly held by the LCSD in various districts. Other organisations, like district sports associations (DSAs), could also make applications under the projects to fund their recreation and sports activities.

(ii) Report on Sport For All Day 2013

4.1 Mr Simon LIU reported that the Sport For All Day 2013 was held on 4 August. Adopting the slogan of "Stay Active. Exercise Every Day with Your Family.", the event encouraged members of the public to do sports with their families and establish a healthy lifestyle by making sports part of their daily life and nurturing a habit of doing physical activities for at least 30 minutes a day. The Sport For All Day 2013 was very well received, attracting an attendance of over 220 000, of whom 29 000 participated in a wide range of free programmes and 198 000 enjoyed free use of leisure facilities. In an ongoing effort to promote Sport for All in the community, the LCSD planned to organise the Sport For All Day again in the coming year.

Details of the plan would be made available in a report to Members in due course.

4.2 The Chairman said that the Sport For All Day 2013 was welcomed by members of the public and was successful in encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle.

(ii) Report on the Follow-up to Proposals to Improve the Arrangements for the Booking and Allocation of Recreation and Sports Facilities of the LCSD

5.1 Ms Alice HEUNG of the LCSD presented a PowerPoint report to Members on the latest position regarding the Department's implementation of measures to improve the booking and allocation of recreation and sports facilities in response to the Ombudsman's investigation report. Four improvement measures had been introduced in mid-June 2013, namely (i) the shortening of the advance booking period for individuals from 30 days to 10 days; (ii) the shortening of the reallocation period from 60 days to 15 days for hirers unable to use the booked facilities because of inclement weather; (iii) the cessation of concessions for carers booking facilities; and (iv) the cancellation of the "stand-by" arrangement for free use of football pitches for a six-month trial period.

5.2 Since their introduction the improvement measures had achieved the following results: (i) the operation of facilities was smooth overall with usage rates remaining broadly the same as before; (ii) the abuse of the 60-day reallocation arrangement and that of the half-price concessions for carers booking facilities were restrained; (iii) the no-show rates for facilities booked by individuals showed a downward trend, particularly for tennis courts, suggesting that the shortened advance booking period for individuals helped hirers to be more certain whether they could attend their booked sessions, thus reducing the chances of no-shows; (iv) since the cancellation of the "stand-by" arrangement on a trial basis, the no-show rates for individual bookings of natural and artificial turf football pitches fell sharply from 31-37% to 4-6%, whereas the number of sessions left vacant by the no-shows of original hirers remained largely the same, suggesting that the "stand-by" arrangement had obviously been abused before. Frontline staff regarded the measure as effective in curbing touting activities; some members of the public opined that it had been easier to make bookings since the cancellation of the "stand-by" arrangement. After initial analysis, the LCSD planned to implement the cancellation of the "stand-by" arrangement for football pitches on a long-term basis after the end of the trial period on 18 December 2013.

5.3 The Chairman said that the LCSD had made considerable efforts to

improve the booking and allocation arrangements for recreation and sports facilities. He hoped that the enhanced booking procedure could plug the previous loopholes. He also trusted that the LCSD would continue to listen to the public and carry out reviews and improvements in a timely manner.

5.4 Mr Raphael TONG and Mr Henry CHAN both held the view that the trial scheme to cancel the “stand-by” arrangement for football pitches had proved remarkably effective in curbing touting activities. They suggested that the cancellation be formalised. Mr Raphael TONG enquired about the review of the priority booking arrangements for organisations registered as limited companies. Meanwhile Mr Henry CHAN considered the improvement measures recommended by the Ombudsman to be unduly harsh and unsympathetic, putting enormous additional pressure on frontline staff.

5.5 Mr Bobby CHENG of the LCSD thanked Members for their invaluable views and their support for the cancellation of the “stand-by” arrangement for football pitches. He also thanked Mr Henry CHAN for his consideration for the LCSD’s frontline staff. Mr Bobby CHENG responded that hirers might be allowed to cancel bookings and receive a refund provided that they could not attend their booked sessions for *bona fide* reasons and could provide valid documentary proof (e.g. medical certificates). As regards the shortening of the advance booking period for individuals to 10 days, the LCSD considered, after holding in-depth discussions and consulting the 18 DCs, that the measure could balance the needs of different stakeholders. The Department would review the improvement measures in due course to make sure that abuse would continue to be curbed effectively.

5.6 Ms Alice HEUNG of the LCSD thanked Members for their comments. Her responses were summarised as follows:

- (a) To ensure the effectiveness of the measure, the LCSD had started publicising the cancellation of the “stand-by” arrangement for football pitches two months before it came into effect. Besides, to prevent touts from selling bookings for hired facilities, venue staff would carry out random checks on the identity of the original hirers during the break. Some members of the public had expressed the view that the facility booking process, both online and in-person at venues, had become smoother than before.
- (b) Currently, organisations registered as societies or companies (registered organisations) had priority rights to make bookings three

months in advance. The Ombudsman had recommended that the LCSD review the arrangement to see if it was abused. Since the introduction of the improvement measures, the LCSD's frontline staff had strictly followed the procedure for verifying hirers' identity. Before being allowed to use the booked facilities, registered organisations had to produce documents, including the booking confirmation letter, the identity documents of the users, and the booking receipt. As for the recommendation to cancel their priority booking rights, the LCSD would treat it with caution. Compared to other organisations (such as NSAs, schools, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation, the New Territories Regional Sports Association and DSAs), registered organisations had a shorter priority booking period of three months only. Furthermore, peak-hour block booking of a facility by different organisations was limited to one-third of the total available peak hours per month. Given that there were fewer sessions available for booking by registered organisations, their abuse of facilities was less likely. Currently in the process of collating information, the LCSD expected to complete an analysis of facility bookings in different districts in the first quarter of 2014-15 and would then report its findings to the CSC.

Item 3: Report on the Establishment of Sports Training Bases (CSC Paper 7/13)

6.1 Ms Alice HEUNG briefed Members on CSC Paper 7/13. Members' views on the paper were summarised as follows:

- (a) The Chairman commented that the scheme launched by the LCSD was conducive to enhancing sports development in the local community and further promoting the sporting culture.
- (b) Mr CHENG Shu-ming said on behalf of the relevant NSAs that the conversion of the less utilised Jockey Club Kwai Shing Public Squash Courts into an air gun shooting training centre by the LCSD had indeed contributed to the improvement in the skills and performance of local shooting athletes, which was best demonstrated by the outstanding results achieved by the Hong Kong Team in the recently concluded Southeast Asian Shooting Championships. He called for DSAs' support in promoting shooting to a wider population for future success in international competitions.

- (c) Messrs Daniel CHAM, Henry CHAN and Raphael TONG concurred with the LCS D in its concept and development direction of converting underutilised venues and facilities to other usage for effective use of resources and promotion of the sports concerned. Mr CHAM suggested the LCS D consider revising the contract term from seven years to “five plus five years” with renewal subject to satisfactory performance by the operating bodies, so as to provide an incentive for better performance and greater flexibility in operation. Mr CHAM said that the LCS D could utilise such facilities to offer regular sports training for the public at the intermediate level. Besides, he pointed out that it was necessary to define clearly the naming right for venues and the amount of sponsorship required to avoid misunderstanding.
- (d) Mr Henry CHAN commented that detailed information on the facilities open for public use must be made publicly known by the operating bodies and a proper monitoring mechanism should be established to enhance transparency.
- (e) Mr Raphael TONG fully supported the idea of requiring that operating bodies submit independent audit reports to the LCS D, believing it would help safeguard against profit-making activities. In addition, he would like to know more about the arrangements as to the insurance liability for the daily operation of the sports training bases.

6.2 Ms Alice HEUNG of the LCS D thanked Members for their invaluable views. Her responses were summarised as follows:

- (a) In addition to the satisfactory results achieved in air gun shooting competitions, the performance of our tennis players was also very well. She said that despite the long contract term, the LCS D would monitor the performance of the operating bodies throughout the seven-year period and there were provisions the contract to allow for early termination under exceptional circumstances. Given the self-financing nature of the training centres, the operating bodies might seek sponsorship on their own to enhance operational efficiency.

- (b) At present, the longest term among LCSD contracts was seven years. Having gauged Members' views, the LCSD would explore with relevant departments the feasibility of extending the contract term.
- (c) Apart from the courses offered by the Hong Kong Tennis Association at a rate comparable to that currently charged by the LCSD, tennis training courses were also held at the tennis training base for public participation by the LCSD Kowloon City District Leisure Services Office. Besides, the Hong Kong Shooting Association (HKSA) organised training courses, such as youth training programmes, at the training base in collaboration with the LCSD. Since the opening of the air gun shooting centre, the HKSA had organised its own shooting practice activities/programmes for members. HKSA members were entitled to book the venue by themselves for training and ongoing practice if they possessed a valid arms licence or if a qualified instructor was present during the booked session. Details on the opening hours, fees and facilities of the shooting centre were set out on its charging scheme. With the HKSA's sustained efforts to attract teenage participants by charging them a lower fee for using the training centre and promote its self-practice scheme, the number of participants and utilisation rate of the centre had seen an increase.
- (d) As regards the financial and auditing arrangements, it was stipulated in the contract that the operating bodies should submit an audit report to the Government upon completion of the seven-year contract term. The cumulative financial surplus of the training bases, if any, should be shared between the Government and the operating bodies.
- (e) There were also provisions in the contract requiring that the operating bodies take out an insurance policy for the training bases to protect the rights and interests of all parties.

Item 4: Any Other Business

7.1 Mr Henry CHAN praised the "Fitness Walking" mobile application launched by the LCSD for making a favourable impact.

7.2 Mr Raphael TONG said the floodlighting hours for football pitches should

be adjusted in accordance with the sunset time to avoid disruption to matches. He suggested that the LCSD raise the hire charges to compensate for the additional electricity expenses incurred by turning on the lights ahead of the scheduled time.

7.3 Miss Olivia CHAN of the LCSD opined that it should be less of a problem for the hard-surface pitches under the LCSD as they did not charge fees for use and had floodlights set to operate automatically according to daylight levels. As for the fee-charging turf pitches, the hire charges were lower in the daytime when no floodlighting was needed, but those for the evening were higher with the lights on. Floodlighting was generally not required for the session between 4:30 pm to 6 pm but might become necessary on certain days or under special circumstances when it was dim in the pitches, giving rise to fee-charging and technical issues. She said that she would take note of Members' concern and look into possible ways to deal with this exceptional scenario.

Adjournment of Meeting

8.1 The Chairman thanked Members for attending the meeting. The Secretariat would inform Members of the date of the next meeting.

8.2 The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Community Sports Committee Secretariat
January 2014