

Introduction

To formulate a strategic blueprint for the development of sport in Hong Kong, the Home Affairs Bureau has conducted a review on sports policy and the findings are now published in a report for public consultation. The report covers a wide range of issues that need to be addressed in drawing up a strategic policy for sport. This pamphlet summarises the main recommendations.

Objectives of the sports development in Hong Kong

- ◆ To develop a strong sporting culture in the community
- ◆ To achieve greater excellence by our elite athletes
- ◆ To raise our international profile on sport with a view to gaining wider recognition and creating new opportunities for economic growth

Highlights of the report

Promoting Public Participation in Sport

Apart from the physical and psychological health benefits, participation in sports is fun and enjoyable. Sport also provides a basis for social interaction and helps foster a sense of belonging to the community. Government has been putting various efforts in promoting community-wide participation in sport. To encourage more people to participate in sport, the report has suggested the following measures:

- ◆ to expand the network of the community sports clubs and make them more appealing to people of all ages and levels of ability. These clubs, mostly based at public venues of Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), can foster regular social contact among members and encourage an interest in sport in the community. It would also provide a strong base and the necessary cohesion for the development of sport at the community level. As they develop, these clubs are also a nurturing ground for volunteers, coaches, athletes and other sport-related professionals;
- ◆ to take a more client-oriented and innovative approach in the planning, design and management of public sports venues which could be enhanced to serve as a social hub for their users through the provision of suitable ancillary facilities such as reading and audio-visual materials, attractive catering facilities and appropriate retail outlets. This will attract more repeat users and help promote sport and healthy lifestyle more effectively;

- ◆ to develop more attractive and accessible public sports programmes, and to take a more pro-active approach in the organisation of promotional campaigns and activities such as the “Young Athlete Training Scheme” and the “Healthy Exercise for All” Campaign, in order to draw more people into sport; and
- ◆ to provide funding for organising more major international sporting events in Hong Kong which can generate local interest in sport, enhance social cohesion and inspire more widespread community participation.

More Sport for Students

Sport can help develop confidence and social skills in school-age children. Involvement in organised sport, in particular, can develop such good qualities as leadership and team building. To encourage students to take part in and enhance an interest in sport, and thereby lay a firm foundation for lifelong healthy practices, the report has put forward the following proposals:

- ◆ schools are encouraged to adopt a more focussed approach for sport and allocate an appropriate part of their curriculum time to the Physical Education Key Learning Area. The Education Department should continue to assist schools in making funding applications for school sports activities;
- ◆ to expand the School Sports Programme (SSP), presently covers about half of Hong Kong schools to all schools. An SSP Resource Centre could be provided to offer Internet-related information and reference materials for use by schools;
- ◆ to provide more recognition to students who have excelled in school sport by expanding the current arrangement of admitting secondary school students with good sporting achievements or with good sporting potentials by universities so as to attract more secondary school students to get involved in sports training in schools; and
- ◆ to establish a Student Sport Co-ordinating Committee so as to set out a broad, integrated framework for participation in student sport from primary one to tertiary level, thus facilitates a more effective management of the transition between various programmes at various levels, and to raise the profile of student sport in the community through appropriate public relations initiatives.

Maintaining Support for Disabled Athletes

In recent years, Hong Kong’s disabled athletes have achieved considerable success in international sports competitions. To maintain support for disabled athletes, the report has suggested:

- ◆ to explore the need for providing full-time coaches at the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) to facilitate the training of disabled athletes or funding support to relevant sports governing organisations (NSAs) for employment of full-time coaches which are not available now;
- ◆ to provide better ancillary facilities such as carparks, specialist equipment storage, sufficient shower and toilet facilities for the training of squads of disabled athletes when planning and designing new public sports venues; and
- ◆ to encourage wider public recognition of the achievements of disabled athletes.

Planning, Design and Management of Public Sports Venues

Hong Kong has a good mix of public sports venues but the design and management can be further improved to create a more sporting and welcoming environment for athletes and the public. With a view to improving current practice in the planning, design and management of public sports facilities as well as Hong Kong's capacity to host major international events, the report has the following recommendations:

- ◆ to adopt a more strategic, client-oriented and innovative approach in the planning, design and management of public sports facilities, taking into account public preferences, trends and popularity of different types of sports;
- ◆ to promote greater involvement of the private sector in the planning and management of public sports facilities, including to test out the "Design-Build-Operate" mode of delivery, in order to have more diverse facilities;
- ◆ to conduct technical and financial feasibility studies for a proposed new stadium with 50,000 seats in South East Kowloon and a new multi-purpose indoor arena with 5,000 – 10,000 seats in Lai Chi Kok, West Kowloon to replace respectively the existing Hong Kong Stadium and QE Stadium. The proposed studies should explore new delivery modes, such as public/private partnership, planning parameters and development options, in order to enhance the financial viability and sustainability of the facilities; and
- ◆ to meet the demand for newly-popular sports facilities, Government should study how best to deliver other venues for "Xtreme Games" (such as skateboarding and in-line skating), ice sports, motorsports and water-based sports.

Better prospects for High Performance Sport

Hong Kong's athletes have performed with increasing success in the international sports arena. We need to build on this success and improve the training environment and prospect for elite athletes. As such, the report has suggested:

- ◆ to strengthen sports science and medicine support services to high performance athletes for all NSAs;
- ◆ to draw up a more structured "athletes plan" to provide better support for full-time athletes with regard to financial, educational and career guidance;
- ◆ to strengthen links between HKSI coaches and the NSAs by considering an arrangement whereby an agreement is to be signed between HKSI and NSAs at the beginning of each year to spell out the targets and responsibilities for the sport concerned. Regular reviews are to be carried out to monitor progress and results;
- ◆ to improve the existing provision of high level training bases for the top athletes by upgrading the HKSI and to adopt a more strategic approach in the provision and use of LCSD sports venues and sports facilities in universities/tertiary education institutions to better meet the needs of elite athletes;
- ◆ to invest more resources in developing team sports such as to allow team sports NSAs and clubs to have access to adequate training facilities; and
- ◆ to enhance ties with the Mainland to provide more exchange of training opportunities and admission of talented sports professionals in the field of sports science and coaching.

Creating a More Clearly Defined and Effective Administrative Structure for Sport

To achieve a more streamlined and efficient administrative structure for the delivery of sports services, the report has therefore identified:

- ◆ the need to set up a Sports Commission with responsibility for strategic policy planning and overall coordination; and
- ◆ three possible options for the setting up of the Sports Commission :
 - (a) upgrading the Hong Kong Sports Development Board (SDB) to become a Sports Commission;

- (b) establishing a new Sports Commission to help coordinate the work of the SDB and LCSD; and
- (c) establishing a Sports Commission; dissolving SDB and entrusting elite sports training to a reconstituted HKSI.

The review team considers that there are clearly advantages with option (c) from the structure, roles and functions as well as resource allocation points of view. As any changes in the current administrative structure for sport is a key part of the review of sports policy, it is important that we listen to the views of the wider Hong Kong community before a decision is made.

Review of Public Funding for Sport

Hong Kong invests a considerable amount of public money in sport : running of public sports facilities and programmes; training, competition and financial assistance for elite athletes; subvention to NSAs; support for promoting district sport programmes and student sports, etc. We need to improve mechanisms for tracking and evaluating the way in which these resources are invested. With these in mind, the report has the following suggestions for change:

- ♦ to review the mechanism and criteria in subventing NSAs with a view to ensuring a fairer allocation of resources;
- ♦ to evaluate the choice and number of “Focus” sports in the elite training programmes with a view to optimising the effectiveness of the resources put into the programmes;
- ♦ to have one single funding body for sport and simplify procedural requirements;
- ♦ to establish an “Event Fund” to support the hosting of international sports events in Hong Kong; and
- ♦ where necessary, to re-balance and redeploy within the current global recurrent allocation of \$2.43 billion for sport and recreation to ensure a more efficient allocation of resources.

Consultation

The review report does not offer all the answers to the problems currently facing sports development in Hong Kong. It does, however, aim to open the door to a wider discussion of these issues, so that we may draw up a strategic policy in a way that meets the needs of the community. We welcome views and comments.