

LCQ7: Leisure and cultural services projects of former Municipal Councils

Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Hok-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (November 1):

Question:

It has been reported that in view of the economic growth and favourable returns of the Exchange Fund, the Government will allocate funds to expedite the implementation of the outstanding leisure and cultural services ("LCS") projects of the former Municipal Councils ("MCs"), and the costs involved will be around \$3 billion. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it plans to use \$3 billion to expedite the implementation of the outstanding LCS projects of the former MCs; if so, of the timing for the funding arrangement to be finalised, as well as the details and implementation timetables of the projects concerned; and whether it has estimated the job opportunities that can be created by these projects;

(b) given that the Government reported to this Council in early 2006 that it would commence planning for 21 LCS projects, whether the LCS projects to be implemented with the above-mentioned funds are among the 21 projects or are entirely new projects; and

(c) whether the above-mentioned arrangement will set a precedent, and whether the Government will allocate special funds under similar circumstances in future to implement projects to improve people's livelihood or measures to enhance social welfare?

Reply:

Madam President,

My reply to Hon Cheung Hok-ming's question is as follows: -

(a)&(c)Public works projects, including leisure and cultural services (LCS) projects, are funded by the Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRF). The saying that a special allocation of \$ 3 billion or use of the returns from the Exchange Fund for implementation of the ex-Municipal Council (ex-MC) projects is unfounded. The Administration appreciates the concerns of Members, District Councils, and the community on the dire needs for LCS facilities. Hence, we plan to implement 70 LCS projects within 5 years (2006-07 to 2010-11). This would involve a total investment of \$11 billion. After the completion of the planning work and the necessary procedures, we would proceed to seek the Finance Committee's funding approval for allocation from the CWRF to implement these projects. It is estimated that over 5000 jobs could be created in these projects. On October 23, we reported the plan to the Subcommittee to Follow up the Outstanding Leisure and Cultural Services Projects of the Former Municipal Councils under the Home Affairs Panel (the Subcommittee).

(b)Early this year we reported to the Subcommittee on proceeding further with the planning work of 21 LCS projects (19 of them are ex-MC projects). These 21 projects have been included in the above 70 projects.

Ends/Wednesday, November 1, 2006

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