

LCQ17: Differences in charges for cultural and recreational facilities in different districts

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Yiu-chung and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 30):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the reasons for the differences in the current charges for government cultural and recreational facilities in different districts and details of the differences; and
- (b) whether the authorities have tried to narrow or remove such differences; if not, of the reasons for that; and whether the authorities have considered changing the policy and narrowing such differences by lowering the charges?

Reply:

Madam President,

My reply to the respective parts of the question is as follows:

- (a) At present, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) adopts the fees and charges set by the two former municipal councils for its leisure facilities. Owing to the different pricing policies of the two former municipal councils, there are discrepancies in the fees and charges for certain facilities in the urban areas and the New Territories. Overall speaking, except for the fees and charges for tennis courts, badminton courts, natural turf pitches and swimming pools in the New Territories, which are higher than those in the urban areas during peak hours, the fees and charges for major recreational and sports facilities in the New Territories are generally lower than those in the urban areas. A list of the fees and charges for major LCSD leisure facilities in the urban areas and the New Territories is set out at the Annex.

The cultural facilities provided by the LCSD in various districts include 13 performance venues, two indoor stadia, 14 museums, two heritage centres, one film archive, one visual arts centre, 66 static libraries and 10 mobile libraries. These cultural facilities currently adopt a total of about 500 types of fees and charges primarily set by the two former municipal councils before their dissolution in 2000. The basic hire charges for LCSD performance venues are not standardised; they are determined mainly by factors like location, standard of facilities, area, seating capacity and types of services provided. Regarding the public libraries, as the service charges set by the two former municipal councils are adopted, there are discrepancies in the charges for certain services in the urban areas and the New Territories. These include the charges for microfilm photocopying, computer/CD-ROM database printouts, damaged audio cassette/CD plastic cases, loss of audio cassette/CD covers and hiring of extension activities rooms. In respect of museums, a standard admission fee of HK\$10 is charged at seven major museums, except the Hong Kong Science Museum, which charges HK\$25. The remaining seven small museums and the film archive are all admission free. The variation in museum charges is based on the scale of the museums rather than the districts in which they are located.

(b) Since its establishment in 2000, the LCSD has reviewed the fees and charges for the facilities concerned. It has so far aligned the concessionary rates of various recreational and sports facilities in the urban areas and the New Territories, including those for the use of public swimming pools, tennis courts, turf pitches, squash courts, sports centres, holiday villages, etc. Users or organisations of the same category, including children/infants, people with disabilities, students, schools and subvented organisations, can enjoy the same concessionary rates when using these facilities across the territory.

The Government will, in the light of current subsidies for the facilities and services concerned, examine the feasibility of and options for aligning the fees and charges.

Ends/Wednesday, April 30, 2008