

LCQ17: Cultural, recreational and sports facilities

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Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kong-wah and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 14):

Question:

Regarding the utilisation of indoor cultural, recreational and sports facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the utilisation rates of different types of venues at town halls, civic centres and sports complexes in various districts in the past three years;

(b) whether it has identified which districts have a shortfall in cultural, recreational and sports facilities at present, and whether the new facilities required will be provided in such districts in the next two years; if so, of the details; and

(c) given the significant changes in the population structure of certain districts over the past two decades, whether it has assessed if the existing cultural, recreational and sports facilities in various districts can still meet the needs of the people of different age groups, particularly youth and the elderly?

Reply:

Madam President:

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

(a) The average utilisation rates of the sports centres under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) over the past three years are 74% in 2005/06, 76% in 2006/07 and 77% in 2007/08, with the average peak-hour utilisation rate reaching 88%.

As for the utilisation rates of the city/town halls and civic centres in various districts over the past three years, please refer to Annex I.

(b) & (c) The LCSD always keeps a close watch on the public demand for and provision of cultural and recreational facilities in various districts. Prior to the setting up of any new cultural, recreational and sports facilities, consideration is

given not only to the utilisation rates of similar facilities in the district concerned, but also to a number of factors including the population structure of the district, the recommended standards for provision of recreational facilities on the basis of district population as set out in “Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines”, the needs raised by the District Council and local residents, etc. Every effort is made by the department to provide cultural and recreational facilities that best meet the needs of local residents of all ages, including the elderly and youth.

Regarding leisure facilities, the LCSD has 55 new projects and improvement works scheduled to be completed from 2008 to 2011. For details please refer to Annex II.

Since civic centre facilities involve high project costs and substantial long-term financial commitments, it is imperative for the Government to take into careful consideration in its planning of new facilities various relevant factors including the aspirations of different sectors of the community, provision and utilisation of existing facilities, related cultural policies, etc. to ensure efficient use of resources.

Apart from the West Kowloon Cultural District, additional performing arts venues under planning by the Government include a cross district community cultural centre in Kwun Tong, a Xiqu activity centre to be converted from Yau Ma Tei Theatre, and an annex building to Ko Shan Theatre in Hung Hom. For details please refer to Annex III. The Government will also keep under review the demand in different districts for performing arts facilities of various scales.

The performing arts facilities of the LCSD are open for use by all sectors of the community and the general public. The department holds regular customer liaison meetings at various venues and conducts public opinion surveys as and when appropriate to ascertain the needs and expectations of venue users, audiences of different types of programmes and members of the public regarding performing arts facilities, programmes and events.

Ends/Wednesday, May 14, 2008