

## LCQ15: Cattle Depot Artist Village

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Following is a question by the Hon Priscilla Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 22):

Question:

Since it was renovated in 2001, the former Ma Tau Kok Quarantine Depot has been renamed Cattle Depot Artist Village and its workshops have become available for renting by local artists. In recent months, some members of the Kowloon City District Council have relayed to me that since the management work of the above venue involves many government departments, there is confusion in the rights and responsibilities of the parties concerned. In addition, as the venue is not completely open for visit by the public, it has not been fully utilised. Moreover, as there is no policy bureau dedicated to the promotion of cultural development, the work in this area has failed to yield satisfactory results. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the criteria adopted for vetting and approving applications for renting the workshops of the Cattle Depot Artist Village and the relevant rentals; the current number and percentage of workshops which are vacant;

(b) whether hirers are allowed under the rental conditions to engage in work which is unrelated to art and cultural creation in their workshops (such as conducting business trading activities);

(c) which government department is currently responsible for the management of the Cattle Depot Artist Village; whether it has any plan to completely open the Cattle Depot Artist Village for visit by the public;

(d) given that the Cattle Depot Artist Village is currently classified as a Grade III historical building, whether it knows if the Antiquity Advisory Board has any plan to upgrade the building's grading;

(e) whether the Development Bureau has any plan to revitalise the Cattle Depot Artist Village further; if it has, of the relevant timetable, and whether it will adopt leading the renewal of the entire old Kowloon City district and complementing the synergistic

development of Kai Tak new development area etc. as the prime factors of consideration in the revitalisation of the Village;

(f) whether it knows how the Cattle Depot Artist Village and Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, which was opened in September 2008, coordinate with each other and divide between them the work on arts development; and

(g) given that at present Hong Kong does not have a policy bureau dedicated to the promotion of cultural development, while the Government of Macau Special Administrative Region has set up the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture for such purposes, whether the Government will set up a culture bureau to coordinate the work on cultural development in various areas?

Reply:

President,

The former Ma Tau Kok Quarantine Depot has been leased to the old tenants of the former Government Supplies Department Headquarters at Oil Street, North Point since 2001. The Cattle Depot Artist Village has been given this name as the tenants thereat are mainly engaged in arts activities.

(a) At present, all tenants at the former Ma Tau Kok Quarantine Depot (the Cattle Depot) used to be tenants of the ex-Government Supplies Department Headquarters at Oil Street, North Point. After moving out from the Oil Street, these tenants started to take up tenancy for non-domestic purpose at the Cattle Depot paying market rent since 2001. Of the 20 lettable units at Cattle Depot, five are vacant at present. As most of the vacant units require substantial repairs, they are not put up for lease at the moment.

(b) According to the existing tenancy agreements, the Cattle Depot units are for non-domestic purpose, but not limited to arts and cultural creation use.

(c) The Cattle Depot is currently managed by the Government Property Agency. As the property is not equipped with fire safety installations, lighting, emergency access and hygiene facilities that meet the conditions under the Places of Public Entertainment licensing framework, the Cattle Depot cannot be fully open to the public for staging large-scale activities.

However, to meet the special needs of individual activities, tenants may apply for a Temporary Place of Public Entertainment Licence from the relevant departments and open their premises for public patronage upon obtaining the necessary approvals.

(d) The Cattle Depot was rated as a Grade III historical building in 1994. As the Antiquities and Monuments Office has proposed to the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) for the upgrading of the building to be a Grade II historical building, the AAB is now consulting the public on the proposal.

(e) The Development Bureau has commissioned the Hong Kong Arts Development Council to study the future development of the Cattle Depot. The study will examine the background and the current situation of the Cattle Depot as an artist village, the history of local and overseas artist villages, as well as the feasibility of operating an artist village at the Cattle Depot in future. Besides, the Development Bureau has also commissioned the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct a study on the history and the community development of the Kowloon City district. The study will cover how the Cattle Depot, after revitalisation, can generate a synergistic effect on nearby places, including the Kai Tak new development area and the old quarters in To Kwa Wan like the 13 Streets. It will also examine the different heritage values of the historical buildings in Kowloon City and their impact on the development of the district, as well as the possibility of outlining a heritage trail/network in the district.

The Development Bureau keeps an open mind on what conservation approach to adopt to revitalise the former Ma Tau Kok Quarantine Depot. The Development Bureau is now studying the history and background, the current situation, as well as the future development and operating mode of this historical building.

(f) At present, it is not a tenancy condition or a requirement on the Cattle Depot tenants to conduct any arts creation activities in their units. The tenants operate independently and they do not have to follow any operation or development direction.

On the other hand, the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (the Centre), which is planned, developed and operated by the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), is established to achieve the following three objectives:

- (i) Provide studio space for local artists and art groups;
- (ii) Help promote arts and culture in the community; and
- (iii) Nurture creative arts talents for Hong Kong.

When considering the tenancy applications for the Centre, whether an applicant would help the HKBU achieve the Centre's objectives, such as participation in the Centre's art promotion projects, was part of the assessment.

As the two places are markedly different in their background, management and their mode of operation, against our cultural policy objective celebrating diversified development, we do not need the two to have any coordination and division of work in the development of the arts.

(g) The Home Affairs Bureau is the policy bureau in the Government responsible for the cultural and arts development of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region. There are currently two Deputy Secretaries at the bureau responsible for the coordination of the cultural policy and cultural development in various fields, as well as the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District respectively.

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