

LCQ3: Public swimming pools

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 (October 29):

Question:

Regarding the utilisation of public swimming pools under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the respective attendances of various public swimming pool complexes since January this year, and how these figures compare to last year's figures;
- (b) whether it has reviewed if there are presently sufficient public swimming pools in various districts; and
- (c) whether the authorities have received any request from the general public in the past three years for the construction of heated swimming pools; of the criteria adopted by the authorities for deciding on the construction of heated swimming pools; whether they have assessed if these criteria are outdated; and of the districts where heated swimming pools will be constructed in the next three years?

Reply:

President,

- (a) During the period from January 1 to September 30 this year, the attendance at the public swimming pools under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) stood at about 10.27 million, representing an increase of about 30% as compared with the attendance of about 7.91 million in the same period last year. The increase was mainly due to the tremendous popularity of the "Free Admission Scheme of LCSD Leisure Facilities" launched by the Department from July 1 to September 30 this year. During that period, the attendance stood at about 7.63 million, representing an increase of about 68% as compared with the attendance of about 4.55 million in the same period last year.

(b) According to the standard of provision set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, there should be one swimming pool complex per 287 000 population. At present, there are a total of 37 public swimming pool complexes under the management of the LCSD throughout the territory. The overall provision generally meets the standard set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. The authorities will, in the light of demand and availability of resources, construct swimming pool complexes to cater for the needs of the public.

(c) The authorities have received about 30 suggestions on the construction of heated swimming pools in the past three years. The LCSD has planned to add new heated swimming pool facilities to five existing swimming pool complexes when they are redeveloped, reprovisioned or converted. The Department has also planned to construct eight new swimming pool complexes with heated pool facilities. These works projects are expected to complete between 2009 and 2015, with seven of them to commence construction within the next three years. The details are set out in the Annex.

The Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines do not set out any standard of provision on heated swimming pools but mention that where resources permit, new swimming pool complexes should include heated swimming pools to promote year round swimming habits. In planning to construct new swimming pool complexes or converting the existing pool complexes, the LCSD will take into account factors such as the views of district councils, public demand for heated swimming pool facilities, the usage rate of existing heated swimming pool facilities and the population of the respective districts in deciding on the provision of heated swimming pool facilities.

Ends/Wednesday, October 29, 2008