

LCQ12: Opening hours and utilisation rate for ball game pitches/courts under Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Following is a question by the Hon Abraham Shek and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Ms Florence Hui, in the Legislative Council today (November 4):

Question:

Members of the public have reflected that for various reasons, the opening hours of ball game pitches/courts under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) are not the same, thus rendering the residents nearby unable to use such facilities for physical fitness exercises. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether the lack of a floodlight system is the reason why the Bowen Road Tennis Court in Wan Chai is not open to the public at night; if so, why it is not fitted with such a system; if not, of the reasons for not opening the tennis court at night;

(b) of the other ball game pitches/courts under LCSD in which the situation is similar, the distribution of the location of such pitches/courts, and whether there is any plan to improve the situation; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(c) whether, in the past three years, statistics had been collected on the utilisation rates of ball game pitches/courts under LCSD and improvements had been made to the utilisation; if such statistics had been collected and improvement had been made, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

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

(a) Bowen Road Tennis Court, which is managed by LCSD has four standard tennis courts that are not fitted with floodlights. The courts are open daily from 6am to 7pm in summer (i.e., from April to September every year) and from 7am to 6pm in winter (i.e., from October every year to March of the following year). The courts are located

on top of the Bowen Road Fresh Water Service Reservoir, and the installation of floodlights would entail the erection of structures on top of the reservoir to support the floodlight posts. This would have an adverse impact on the structure of the reservoir and for this reason, floodlights cannot be installed at this venue.

(b) LCSD manages 260 tennis courts. Apart from Bowen Road Tennis Court in Wan Chai, the only courts that are not fitted with floodlights are those located at Ma Tau Wai Service Reservoir Playground. This venue is located on top of a service reservoir, and is therefore subject to the same constraints as Bowen Road Tennis Court. All other tennis courts under LCSD management are fitted with floodlights and are open at night.

As for other outdoor venues under LCSD management, the department provides 89 natural or artificial turf pitches for activities such as football, rugby, hockey and lawn bowls. All but 13 of those pitches are fitted with floodlights. The pitches without floodlighting are at Aberdeen Sports Ground (one), Happy Valley Recreation Ground (five), Tai Hang Tung Recreation Ground (three), Kowloon Tsai Sports Ground (one), Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground (two) and Morse Park (one). LCSD is planning to convert three natural turf pitches at Happy Valley Recreation Ground and one natural turf pitch at Morse Park into third generation artificial turf pitches and provide them with floodlights. As for the other 9 pitches, they are not fitted with floodlights due to site constraints or to other constraints in the neighbouring areas. If conversion or re-surfacing works for these pitches become necessary in future, LCSD will also examine the feasibility of installing floodlights at these pitches.

(c) The utilisation rate for tennis courts under LCSD management rose from 43% in 2006 to 63% last year. The utilisation rate of courts at popular venues such as Victoria Park and Causeway Bay Sports Ground was as high as 86%. LCSD continues to monitor the utilisation of tennis courts and has arranged for the organisation of more tennis training courses at venues with lower utilisation in order to enhance public interest in tennis and increase usage. If the utilisation rate of individual tennis courts remains persistently low, LCSD will consider converting the courts into other facilities such as basketball courts, mini-soccer pitches, archery practice ranges and tai chi gardens. In the past seven years, the LCSD has converted a total of 15 tennis courts to other uses.

As for turf pitches, the demand has always been very high. The average utilisation rate and the utilisation rate during peak hours for artificial turf pitches in the past three

years were around 75% and 95% respectively. The utilisation rate for natural turf pitches is close to 100%.

Ends/Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Issued at HKT 16:54

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