

LCQ11: Public swimming pools

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Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 14):

Question:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) conducted a questionnaire survey in 2008 so as to study the participation patterns of members of the public in physical activities and sports. According to the findings of the survey, swimming ranked second among the sports in which the public had participated most frequently and was also the sport which they were most eager to learn. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the average monthly attendances at public swimming pools in the past three years (set out in table form) after discounting the numbers during the implementation of the Free Admission Scheme of LCSD Leisure Facilities in 2008;

(b) whether the authorities have conducted surveys again after completing the aforesaid questionnaire survey in 2008 so as to study the utilisation of public swimming pools by members of the public (including the weekly number of attendances) and their satisfaction levels towards the services in public swimming pools; if so, of the findings; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will consider conducting such surveys;

(c) of the number of public swimming pools which will be completed and commissioned in the next three years according to the existing plan; focusing on the findings of the aforesaid survey, whether the authorities will expedite the pace of constructing public swimming pools;

(d) of the criteria based on which the authorities set the admission fees for public swimming pools;

(e) given that the admission fees for the public swimming pools in the New Territories during weekends, Sundays and public holidays are higher than those for weekdays, whether the authorities will consider standardising the admission fees based on those for weekdays, so as to encourage more members of the public to use

public swimming pools; and

(f) given that LCSD has indicated to quite a number of District Councils (including Sha Tin District Council) last year that it would conduct a feasibility study on the proposal to launch monthly tickets for public swimming pools, of the progress of the study, and when it will decide on whether or not such monthly tickets will be launched?

Reply:

President,

(a) After excluding the figures recorded during the implementation of the "Free Admission Scheme of Leisure Facilities" in 2008, the average attendance per month at public swimming pools under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in the past three years is tabulated at Annex 1.

(b) To upgrade its service quality, the LCSD conducted telephone opinion surveys on its recreation and sports facilities, including public swimming pools, in 2002 and 2009. The surveys covered items such as the frequency of use of public swimming pools by members of the public and their satisfaction level with public swimming pool services. According to the findings of the surveys, among those respondents who used public swimming pools, the percentage of respondents who used the pools at least once a month increased from 44.6% in 2002 to 46.7% in 2009, and the percentages of respondents who indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with public swimming pool services in 2002 and 2009 were 60.1% and 60.8% respectively. The details are set out at Annex 2.

(c) According to current plans, LCSD will provide six new swimming pool complexes for public use in the coming three years (i.e., between now and 2012). LCSD will monitor the progress of these projects towards timely completion and commissioning.

(d) In determining the fees and charges for public swimming pools and other recreation and sports venues, LCSD will consider and balance the relevant factors, including utilisation of the recreation and sports facilities, public affordability and acceptability, and the Government's subsidy levels.

(e) and (f) LCSD has set up a working group to review the fees and charges for the recreation and sports venues (including swimming pool complexes) under its management. The review covers the proposal to introduce a monthly ticket scheme for public swimming pools and the alignment of admission fees at different time slots for swimming pools in the New Territories. Given the wide range of recreation and sports venues provided by the department, the number of fee items involved in this review is nearly 1,000. The working group has conducted a number of studies, on issues such as the utilisation of swimming pools, cost recovery rates and concessionary fees. Completion of the review is at the top of LCSD's agenda, and the department will announce the results of the review upon its conclusion.

Ends/Wednesday, April 14, 2010

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