

LCQ11: Fees and charges for recreation and sports facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (October 21):

Question:

At present, the leisure facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) still adopt the fees and charges set by the two former municipal councils. As the two municipal councils adopted different pricing policies at that time, there are discrepancies in the fees and charges for certain facilities in the urban areas and the New Territories. Overall speaking, except for the fees and charges for tennis courts, badminton courts, natural turf pitches and swimming pools in the urban areas during peak hours, which are lower than those in the New Territories, the fees and charges for major recreational and sports facilities in the urban areas are generally higher than those for the same types of facilities in the New Territories. In its respective replies to the written questions from Members of this Council on November 23, 2005 and April 30, 2008, the Government indicated that it would examine the feasibility of aligning the fees and charges concerned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the progress of the feasibility study on aligning the fees and charges; if the study has been completed, of the results; and whether the fees and charges will be aligned; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(b) as the Community Sports Committee of the Sports Commission has recently published the report of the study "Sport for All - Participation Patterns of Hong Kong People in Physical Activities", and one of the measures proposed by LCSD in response is to encourage members of the public to actively participate in sports and physical activities, whether the Government will adopt the lower amount of the existing fees and charges when setting the aligned fee level, so as to encourage members of the public to participate in sports?

Reply:

President,

(a) to (b) I would like to respond to both parts of the question jointly, as follows:

LCSD has set up a working group to study how to align the fees and charges for recreation and sports facilities in the urban areas and the New Territories. Detailed consideration and balancing of relevant factors, including the overall economic situation of Hong Kong, the utilisation rates of the recreation and sports facilities, the public's affordability and acceptability, and the Government's subsidy level will be necessary. One of the considerations is how we could make use of the fee policy to encourage public participation in sport and physical activities, as a response to the recommendations made in the report of the study on "Sport for All - Participation Patterns of Hong Kong People in Physical Activities". As the work involved is complicated and as there are nearly 1,000 fee items for recreation and sports facilities to be reviewed, more handling time is needed.

Currently, LCSD has aligned the concessionary rates for various recreation and sports facilities in the urban areas and the New Territories, including those for the use of public swimming pools, tennis courts, soccer pitches, squash courts, sports centres and holiday villages. Users of or organisations serving sectoral groups, including children, people with disabilities, students, schools and subvented organisations can enjoy the same concessionary rates when using these facilities across the territory. As for the other fee items, LCSD will proceed as quickly as possible with a view to putting forward practicable recommendations for consultation with the public, although the timetable for implementing the new fees and charges is not available for the time being.

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