

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2002)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Recreation and Sports

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

It was mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Government would continue to enhance utilisation of existing sports facilities. It was, however, noted that both the actual attendance at public swimming pools in 2023 and the planned attendance for 2024 were well below the target. Among the 45 public swimming pool complexes under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, only 28 with heated swimming facilities were opened during winter, with the rest being closed for maintenance for nearly most of the year. Please advise this Committee of:

- a. the annual expenditure on heated swimming facilities and the maintenance costs for swimming pools during closure; whether the Department has studied the feasibility of providing heated facilities at all swimming pools; as well as the expenditure on such works in the past;
- b. the respective proportion and expenditure on remuneration of civil service lifeguards, contract lifeguards and seasonal lifeguards among those currently employed; as well as whether the Department has a plan to recruit additional non-civil service lifeguards under the Labour Importation Schemes, given closure of some swimming pools due to lack of lifeguards?

Asked by: Hon FOK Kai-kong, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

- a. There are 28 heated swimming pools under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), all of which are opened during winter. The estimated expenditure in 2023-24 was about \$896 million. In addition to co-ordinating annual maintenance by various works departments, the LCSD also repairs and replaces defective parts in a timely manner in response to wear and tear of facilities. Given that such maintenance and repair works are undertaken by various works departments, and costs related to repair, maintenance, improvement, refurbishment and equipment procurement are included in the overall expenditure of those departments, the LCSD

does not keep a breakdown of cost figures for the repair and maintenance works during closure of swimming pools.

Generally speaking, the Government will, when planning new sports facilities (including heated swimming pools) and improving the existing ones, consider various relevant factors, including the current provision of sports facilities across Hong Kong and at the district levels, policy objectives of sports development, utilisation of existing facilities, demographic changes, views of District Councils and relevant stakeholders, site availability and technical feasibility.

Details on the heated swimming pool projects completed or under construction/conversion by the LCSD in recent years are at **Annex**. As the expenditure on construction of new heated swimming pools or conversion of existing swimming pools forms part of the project estimate, the LCSD does not keep a breakdown of expenditure figures for such projects.

- b. As at 1 August 2023, the actual number of lifeguards on long-term employment with the LCSD (excluding civil service senior lifeguards) was 1 251. The number of contract lifeguards (including non-civil service contract (NCSC) Contract Full-year Lifeguards, NCSC full-time Seasonal Lifeguards and Post-Retirement Service Contract Seasonal Lifeguards) was 309, representing about 20% of the total number of lifeguards. As at 1 March 2024, the LCSD's total expenditure on remuneration of lifeguards on long-term employment in 2023-24, calculated based on notional annual mid-point salary value, was about \$290 million, while that of contract lifeguards was about \$63 million. The LCSD is actively preparing for the outsourcing of lifesaving services at selected public swimming pools, and will continue to study the feasibility of importing qualified lifeguards from the Mainland/overseas in consultation with bureaux/departments and relevant organisations.

Annex to Reply Serial No. CSTB303

**Details on the heated swimming pool projects
completed or under construction by the LCSD in recent years**

Project title	Works related to heated swimming pools	Remarks
1. Sports Centre, Community Hall and Football Pitches in Area 1, Tai Po	Provision of 1 new indoor heated swimming pool and 1 new indoor heated training pool	Opened in 2022
2. Provision of Heated Swimming Pool through Conversion of Morse Park Swimming Pool, Wong Tai Sin	Construction of 1 secondary pool with water heating systems in-situ	Opened in 2023
3. Redevelopment of Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool	Provision of 1 indoor heated main pool	Anticipated to be completed by end 2024
4. Swimming Pool Complex and Open Space in Area 107, Tin Shui Wai	Provision of 1 new indoor heated training pool	Anticipated to be completed by end 2024
5. Amenity Complex in Area 103, Ma On Shan – Pre-construction Activities	Provision of 2 indoor heated training pools and 1 indoor heated teaching pool	Pre-construction activities anticipated to be completed by end 2024

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