

## **Community Sports Committee**

### **Proposed new arrangements for booking and allocating recreation and sports facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

#### **Purpose**

This paper aims to seek Members' views on the proposed new arrangements for booking and allocating recreation and sports facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD).

#### **Background**

2. To enable a more efficient and fair allocation of turf soccer pitches that are in high demand, the LCSD has launched the "Turf Soccer Pitches Balloting Pilot Scheme" since 20 June 2018, as part of the efforts to curb touting activities and prevent abusive use of facilities. Under the pilot scheme, turf soccer pitches were first available for booking with sessions allocated by ballot, and remaining sessions, if any, after the deadline would be made available for booking by the public on a first-come-first-served basis. Given that real-name registration was required for entry to the ballot, the pilot scheme had achieved good results since its implementation. In addition to allowing members of the public to book turf soccer pitches in a fair and just manner, the mechanism put in place had eliminated the need for members of the public to queue up at booking counters in early morning for booking such facilities. The details of the anti-touting measures introduced by the LCSD in recent years are at **Annex I**.

3. On another front, the LCSD is developing a new intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system (the new system) to replace the existing computerised booking system "Leisure Link". The new system

will be rolled out in phases, with its core functions<sup>1</sup> and enhanced functions<sup>2</sup> anticipated to be available during Phase 1 in mid-2023 and Phase 2 in 2024 respectively. A range of enhanced functions will be offered under the new system, including allocation of recreation and sports facilities through ballot on top of the first-come-first-served allocation mechanism in light of the demand for individual facilities and sessions. The novel functions of the new system and their benefits to the public are at **Annex II**.

### **New measures for booking and allocating recreation and sports facilities**

4. To enable a more efficient and fair allocation of valuable community resources and to further curb touting activities, the LCSD intends to extend, upon implementation of Phase 1 of the new system, the use of the new function to allocate recreation and sports facilities through ballot beyond turf soccer pitches to other popular recreation and sports facilities, such as tennis courts, those in the multi-purpose arenas of sports centres (badminton courts, basketball courts and volleyball courts, etc.), as well as non-fee charging outdoor courts/pitches (such as hard-surface soccer pitches and basketball courts). The LCSD will offer this new booking function in phases in an orderly manner, having regard to a range of factors including the demand for individual facilities and sessions, priority in launching such a function, extent of acceptance by the public.

### **Collating public opinion**

5. To collate public opinion on the booking and allocation mechanism for recreation and sports facilities under its management, the LCSD has conducted a survey where users are invited to complete online questionnaires by scanning QR codes with mobile phones at its major recreation and sports venues, such as sports centres, tennis courts and soccer pitches, during the period from 1 to 30 November 2022. Alternatively, members of the public may complete the questionnaires by visiting the LCSD's website ([www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/facilities/facilitiesbooking/freeuserscheme\\_survey.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/facilities/facilitiesbooking/freeuserscheme_survey.html)) during the same period. Meanwhile, the LCSD will step up publicity about the survey through various channels such as its website, "LCSD Plusss", posters,

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<sup>1</sup> The core functions include facility booking, programme enrolment, membership registration and management, venue and facility management, programme management, balloting and allotment, attendance management, electronic payment and mobile applications.

<sup>2</sup> The enhanced functions include bookings by organisations, major events management, holiday camps allotment, fitness room management, water sports facilities management, swimming lane booking and management.

press releases, etc.. Please refer to **Annex III** for details of the questionnaires.

6. Upon consolidation of questionnaire results, the LCSD will analyse the public views for further consideration of the implementation arrangements of the new function.

### **Advice Sought**

7. Members are invited to note the arrangements regarding the survey and comment on the new measure for booking and allocating recreation and sports facilities as set out in paragraph 4 of this paper.

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Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
November 2022

## Annex I

### The LCSD's anti-touting measures in the recent few years

- (1) shortening the advance booking period for individuals;
- (2) conducting a real-name re-registration exercise for patrons of the Leisure Link System (LLS) using their Hong Kong identity cards, in a bid to prevent individuals from registering for more than one account using multiple identity documents;
- (3) cancelling the “stand-by” arrangement for soccer pitches;
- (4) reducing the maximum booking hours of fee-charging facilities allowed for individuals during peak hours;
- (5) imposing penalties on individuals failing to show up or breaching the regulations;
- (6) tightening the penalties on the breach of regulations by organisations;
- (7) announcing cancelled sessions on the LCSD's website after cancellation of bookings before being released for re-booking by the public;
- (8) ceasing telephone booking service;
- (9) ceasing to accept bookings of fee-charging recreation and sports facilities by members of the public at LLS check-in counters on behalf of others using copies of others' identity documents;
- (10) putting a mechanism in place to enable booking and allocation of sessions for turf soccer pitches by ballot;
- (11) requiring hirers to produce original copies of identity documents at the check-in counter for verification and registration before using the facilities;
- (12) reducing the daily quota of individual booking of fee-charging recreation and sports facilities from a maximum of four hours to two hours during non-peak hours for the same type of facility at individual venues to eliminate the practice of hiring multiple sessions for touting purposes;
- (13) stepping up random inspections during booked sessions. If the hirer is found not present during the use of the booked session, it will result in one count of breach of Conditions of Use on the part of the hirer. Any two counts of breach within 30 consecutive days will result in suspension of the rights to book fee-charging recreation and sports facilities of the LCSD for 90 days;
- (14) ceasing to accept the arrangements of change of responsible persons by organisations for taking up bookings in an effort to combat suspected touting activities in booked sessions by applying to the venues for changing the responsible persons for taking up bookings;
- (15) varying the commencement of operating hours of the LLS booking counters and self-service kiosks to 7:15 am. Members of the public can then enjoy

priority in booking facilities using the Internet Booking Service of the LLS as early as 7:00 am, in an effort to combat those suspected of engaging in touting activities by deploying “queuing gangs” to line up late at night, which makes it virtually impossible for genuine users to book facilities;

- (16) implementing “iAM Smart” for access to the Internet Booking Service in the Leisure Link e-Services System (LLES) without CAPTCHA input, which is a simpler and more convenient way compared to computer log-in. Under the new arrangement, members of the public may access the booking services with an authenticated identity, thereby ensuring that each Hong Kong identity card number can only be registered with one account, which can only be bound to one smartphone;
- (17) extending the period applicable to the suspension of booking rights of hirers who fail to take up the booked session or are not present during the use of the booked sessions. Under the new measure, the period applicable to all active or newly effective breaches of failing to take up the booked session or not being present during the use of the booked sessions will be extended from 30 consecutive days to 60 consecutive days, with a view to enhancing the deterrence of penalties on non-compliant hirers;
- (18) extending the period of suspension of booking rights for fee-charging recreation and sports facilities from 180 days to 360 days as a penalty to hirers who are found to have engaged in unauthorised transfers of user permits, with a view to aggravating the penalty on those hirers who have committed the breach;
- (19) requiring hirers to provide the LLS user numbers of four other users when submitting online ballot applications for turf soccer pitches. The hirer and three of the other users must check in together and be present during the use of the booked session. Failure to complete the check-in procedure or absence during the use of the booked session will be deemed as one count of breach of failing to take up the booked session or absence during the use of the booked sessions on the part of the hirer; and
- (20) adjusting the booking time of cancelled sessions from 7:30 am to 7:00 am. Members of the public may make online bookings from 7:00 am onwards one day after cancellation, enabling the public to make bookings, in a fair manner, simultaneously with other facilities commencing booking at 7:00 am on a first-come-first-served basis.

**New Functions of the New Intelligent Sports and Recreation Services  
Booking and Information System**

The new system offers a unified and one-stop electronic service platform for members of the public to readily enquire about and book recreation and sports facilities/services of the LCSD via the Internet and the mobile application. The novel functions available in the new system are as follows:

<b>New Functions</b>	<b>Details and Benefits</b>
Individual User Account Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users are required to create individual user accounts to enjoy personalised services;</li> <li>• Those with individual user accounts may readily update their personal profiles and qualifications, facilitating booking of specific recreation and sports facilities and enrolment in programmes;</li> <li>• Users may set their preferences (including types of facilities and programmes), and receive e-notifications on issues such as sessions of venues available for booking or recreation and sports programmes with remaining places, as well as system-generated notifications based on preferences;</li> <li>• Users may receive emergency notifications on issues such as emergency closure of venues resulting from inclement weather or cancellation of recreation and sports programmes/lessons via the mobile application; and</li> <li>• Users may check the ballot results, status of refund applications and record of penalties imposed, etc.</li> </ul>
Bookings of Recreation and Sports Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new system offers a more convenient and user-friendly search function to facilitate booking of recreation and sports facilities by users;</li> <li>• For a more efficient and fair allocation of valuable community resources, the LCSD introduces a novel function of allocating sports and recreation facilities through ballot on top of the first-come-first-served allocation mechanism in light of the demand for individual facilities and sessions to the new system, as part of the efforts to curb touting activities and prevent abusive use of facilities. Such facilities will be booked and allocated by means of ballot, while remaining sessions, if any, will be allocated under the existing allocation mechanism;</li> <li>• The electronic booking services of the new system will cover more recreation and sports facilities, including about 800 non-fee charging venues (e.g. hard-surface soccer pitches),</li> </ul>

<b>New Functions</b>	<b>Details and Benefits</b>
	<p>45 swimming pools and 25 sports grounds; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hirers may complete check-in procedures with their smart ID cards via the smart self-service stations or self check-in machines at leisure venues.</li> </ul>
Purchase of various leisure services tickets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hourly and monthly tickets of the Fitness Room Monthly Ticket Scheme will be available for booking via the Internet, smart self-service stations and the mobile application; and</li> <li>• Ticketing services for the Swimming Pool Monthly Ticket Scheme will be accessible to the public via all channels, namely the Internet, smart self-service stations and the mobile application.</li> </ul>
Payment and Refund Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to accepting payment by credit cards, PPS and Octopus cards, the new system will support more electronic payment options, including FPS and other mobile payment methods such as Apple Pay and Google Pay;</li> <li>• Users may submit online applications for refund, saving the need for in-person submission of applications;</li> <li>• The system will activate the refund procedures under specific circumstances (e.g. inclement weather); and</li> <li>• Users may check the status of refund applications via the online system.</li> </ul>
Enrolment in Recreation and Sports Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new system offers a more convenient and user-friendly search function to facilitate enrolment in recreation and sports programmes;</li> <li>• The LCSD will handle applications to enrol in recreation and sports programmes organised by 18 District Leisure Services Offices, activities held at the Water Sports Centres and territory-wide major events with the aid of this unified electronic platform where places will be allocated by centralised ballot. Each user will only need to submit one application for programmes of the same type (training courses and recreation and sports programmes, competitions, etc.) each month through the system instead of filling out various application forms or queuing up at different booking counters in early morning for popular programmes;</li> <li>• Users may receive e-notifications on issues such as the ballot results, allocation results, fixture draw results and competition results; and</li> <li>• Users may complete check-in procedures via the smart self-service stations, self check-in machines at leisure venues, or the mobile application.</li> </ul>

<b>New Functions</b>	<b>Details and Benefits</b>
Group User Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All group users must create accounts before they are able to use the electronic booking service;</li> <li>• Registered group users may submit applications for booking of sports and recreation facilities electronically; and</li> <li>• Such users may manage their applications (e.g. revising booking, checking booking status and results) online to save effort on checking with individual venues by telephone or written enquiries.</li> </ul>
User-data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real-time data for recreation and sports facilities and programmes will be released as public information for use by the public; and</li> <li>• The new system will enhance data analysis capabilities to facilitate the LCSD in the planning and management of public recreation and sports services. Big data, mainly on utilisation of sports and recreation facilities and programmes, enables the LCSD to better understand and analyse the distribution, usage patterns and preferences of customers, demand of different facilities and programmes in different districts as well as the relevant changes and trend, thereby providing a stronger foundation for refinement of services. The analyses will also facilitate the planning and provision of recreation and sports facilities/services for meeting the changing needs of the community.</li> </ul>



**Opinion Survey on Booking of Recreation and Sports Facilities**

**Background information:**

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (the department) is developing a new intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system (the new system) to replace the existing Leisure Link System. The new system will provide various enhanced functions, including inclusion of a new function for allocating recreation and sports facilities through balloting on top of the allocation mechanism on a first-come-first-served basis, so that the valuable community resources can be allocated more effectively and equitably. It can also help curb touting activities and the abuse of facilities. The new booking function will be rolled out in phases for booking and allocation of facilities through balloting having regard to individual facilities and sessions (such as tennis courts and multi-purpose arenas, including badminton courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, etc. of sports centres). The remaining sessions will be made available for booking by the public in accordance with the existing first-come-first-served mechanism. The new function will also be extended to include non-fee charging hard-surface courts/pitches (such as soccer pitches and basketball courts). The department is pressing ahead with the development of the new system, which is expected to be rolled out next year.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect public views on the new booking method through balloting to be launched by the department.

(Remark: Your e-mail address and Google account will not be included in the response form.)

1. Have you booked recreation and sports facilities using the Leisure Link System in the past 12 months?

- Yes
- No

**Booking of Fee-charging Facilities through Balloting**

2. Do you support allocating the following recreation and sports facilities through balloting, i.e. facilities are booked and allocated through balloting first, while the remaining sessions are allocated in accordance with the existing first-come-first-served mechanism?



**Booking of Non-fee Charging Facilities through Balloting (Hard-surface Soccer Pitches)**

3. Do you agree that the existing mechanism for fee-charging soccer pitches can be adopted for non-fee charging hard-surface soccer pitches, i.e. facilities are first booked and allocated through balloting on a daily basis, while the remaining sessions are booked on a first-come-first-served basis?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No comment

**Balloting Mechanism**

4. Do you agree that same type of recreation and sports facilities at different venues can be allocated during the same period through different methods (balloting or first-come-first served)? For example, the recreation and sports facilities in the arena of Kowloon Park Sports Centre (e.g. badminton courts and basketball courts) can be allocated through balloting during 7pm to 11pm, while the recreation and sports facilities in the arena of Cheung Chau Sports Centre can be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis during the same period (i.e. 7pm to 11pm).

- Agree
- Disagree
- No comment

5. Which of the following sessions do you think should be included in the balloting functions?

- All sessions
- Peak hours (after 6pm from Monday to Friday, any sessions on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays) only
- Non-peak hours only
- No comment
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Data (The anonymous information you provide will be used by the department for statistical and analysis purpose only.)**

In which of the districts do you often use the recreation and sports facilities? (You can select more than one)

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Central & Western | <input type="radio"/> Islands    |
| <input type="radio"/> Eastern           | <input type="radio"/> Kwai Tsing |
| <input type="radio"/> Southern          | <input type="radio"/> North      |
| <input type="radio"/> Wan Chai          | <input type="radio"/> Sai Kung   |
| <input type="radio"/> Kowloon City      | <input type="radio"/> Sha Tin    |
| <input type="radio"/> Kwun Tong         | <input type="radio"/> Tai Po     |
| <input type="radio"/> Sham Shui Po      | <input type="radio"/> Tsuen Wan  |
| <input type="radio"/> Wong Tai Sin      | <input type="radio"/> Tuen Mun   |
| <input type="radio"/> Yau Tsim Mong     | <input type="radio"/> Yuen Long  |

Sex :  Male  Female

Age :  Under 18  18–59  60 or above

Occupation (Please select the group that best represents you):

- Student
- Homemaker (Housewife, Carer, etc.)
- Sports coach
- Full-time worker
- Part-time worker
- Non-working individual
- Retiree
- School/organisation worker (responsible for booking facilities for school/organisation)
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

You are registered Leisure Link patron:  Yes  No

End of questionnaire. Thank you for your valuable feedback.

