

LCQ2: Opening up facilities of the Fanling Golf Course

Following is a question by the Hon Tanya Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (April 22):

Question:

The Fanling Golf Course (FGC) is a sports and recreational facility developed by the Hong Kong Golf Club for use by its members on a piece of land leased from the Government under a private recreational lease (PRL). Under the relevant clause of PRL, FGC is currently required to open up its facilities for use by eligible outside bodies only for a maximum of three sessions of three hours each per week. In addition, the lessee of the land where FGC is located voluntarily opens up FGC's facilities for use by eligible outside bodies from Monday to Friday, as well as its night range for public use from 6pm to 10pm every day. However, some members of the public have pointed out that in recent months, the driving range has often been fully booked in no time, rendering them unable to book the relevant facilities on many occasions. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the utilisation rate of FGC, as well as the number of days and number of hours for which the relevant facilities were available for booking and actually hired by non-members, in each month of the past two years, with a tabulated breakdown by the targets to which the facilities were opened up (i.e. eligible outside bodies and the public); if not, whether it will request the lessee concerned to provide such data;

(2) even though the Government has indicated that it will, when granting FGC a new PRL, add a clause requiring "the further opening up of facilities to outside bodies" (i.e. requiring the lessee to open up 30 per cent of its total sports and recreational facility capacity to eligible outside bodies, and co-organise at least 240 hours of sports activities every month with sports bodies for participation by members of the public), FGC still occupies as vast as 140 hectares of land upon excluding 32 hectares to be used for housing purpose, whether the Government will, in the new PRL, require the lessee to open up more than 30 per cent of the facilities to outside bodies and increase the number of opening hours; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it has gained an understanding from the lessee concerned as to why members of the public have been unable to book FGC's driving range on many occasions in recent months, and requested the lessee to examine (i) whether there have been cases of persons being improperly given the right to make priority bookings or failing to take up their booked sessions on multiple occasions, and (ii) whether appropriate follow-up actions have been

taken in respect of such cases?

Reply:

President,

In 2011, the Executive Council (ExCo) approved the modification on the policy of Private Recreational Leases (PRL) pertaining to the requirement of opening up sports facilities to eligible outside bodies, i.e. adjusting from a maximum of three sessions of three hours per week to a minimum of 50 hours per month. The modified requirement for opening up facilities is applicable to the renewal of leases which expired in 2011 and 2012.

The current lease of FGC, which was granted in 1999 and will expire in August 2020, is not subject to the modification approved by the ExCo in 2011. Nevertheless, the Hong Kong Golf Club (HKGC) has voluntarily followed ExCo's modification and opened up its sports facilities to eligible outside bodies (Note 1) for at least 50 hours per month. Details have been uploaded onto the website of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB):

www.hab.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/other_information/voluntary_open.pdf

. Moreover, HKGC has opened up its 18-hole course at FGC for use on weekdays by members of the public holding valid handicap certificates issued by recognised golf clubs or golfers' associations. Its driving range is also open for public use from 6pm to 10pm every day (weekdays and public holidays).

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

(1) The HAB requires PRL holders to submit quarterly reports for monitoring utilisation of facilities on PRL sites. The reports contain quarterly data without monthly breakdown. Information on utilisation of FGC's facilities is tabulated below:

Quarter		Actual number of hours utilised	
		Eligible outside bodies	Non-members
2018	Q1	3 647	55 193
	Q2	4 855	44 685
	Q3	2 298	33 462
	Q4	4 497	56 867
2019	Q1	4 738	61 750
	Q2	6 525	47 259
	Q3	4 438	48 842
	Q4	4 292	62 088

According to the information provided by the HKGC, around 120 000 golf rounds (Note 2) were played annually in the past two years at FGC, with

eligible outside bodies and non-members accounting for about 40 per cent of the total utilisation.

(2) Sports and recreational facilities of private sports clubs vary in type, quantity and area occupied. The extent to which such facilities are opened up is therefore calculated based on their total sports and recreational facility capacity, instead of the size of the land. Specifically, according to the new PRL policy, private sports clubs are required to further open up their sports and recreational facilities, including opening up at least 30 per cent of the total sports capacity of such facilities to eligible outside bodies, and partner with sports organisations to organise sports programmes that are open for enrolment by members of the public with a minimum of 240 sports programme hours per month.

When applying for renewal upon expiry of the current lease of FGC, a new plan on the opening up of facilities has to be submitted. The new plan will be approved only if it complies with the relevant requirement under the new policy.

(3) The driving range open for use at FGC has 27 bays, which are available for booking on a first-come-first-served basis by members of the public from 6pm to 10pm every day. In general, facilities at the driving range are able to meet the daily public demand. However, the demand for the driving range has increased at the initial stage of the COVID-19 epidemic due to closure of other golf courses and reduction in the number of golfers who played in the Mainland. Given the subsequent severe situation of the epidemic, all PRL sites (including FGC) have, as required by the Government, closed their sports and recreational facilities since March 24 this year until further notice.

Note 1: Eligible outside bodies include schools registered under the Education Ordinance, non-governmental organisations receiving recurrent subventions from the Social Welfare Department, uniformed groups, youth organisations, national sports associations and government departments. In accordance with the new PRL policy, the existing categories of eligible outside bodies have been expanded to include member organisations of the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China; sports organisations affiliated to national sports associations; district sports associations; the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation; the New Territories Regional Sports Association; and sports organisations funded by government departments since 2019.

Note 2: There are a maximum of four players in the same flight. Each individual playing on a course will be counted as one golf round.