

CHAPTER 3

Home Affairs Bureau Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Leisure and Cultural Services Department: Provision and management of sports grounds

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This audit review was carried out under a set of guidelines tabled in the Provisional Legislative Council by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee on 11 February 1998. The guidelines were agreed between the Public Accounts Committee and the Director of Audit and accepted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

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LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT: PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS GROUNDS

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LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT: PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS GROUNDS

Executive Summary

1. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides support to the Home Affairs Bureau in the planning, provision and management of sports and recreation facilities, including sports grounds. According to LCSD, in general, a sports ground contains facilities for athletic track and field events and an in-field grassed area. While the main function of sports grounds is to provide venues for educational institutes (e.g. primary and secondary schools) and other relevant organisations to hold athletic events, sports grounds are also used for playing football including professional league matches. When a sports ground is not hired for exclusive use (e.g. hiring of the whole sports ground by a school for holding a sports day), its running track is open to the public for jogging. As of August 2021, LCSD managed 25 sports grounds. In 2020-21, the expenditure incurred in operation and management of LCSD sports grounds amounted to about \$213 million. The Audit Commission (Audit) has recently conducted a review of the provision and management of LCSD sports grounds.

Planning and provision

2. According to LCSD, in planning new sports facilities or improvement works, it makes reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) and takes into account other relevant considerations such as usage rates of existing facilities and demographic changes. HKPSG adopts a population-based standard in the provision for sports grounds, which is one sports ground per 200,000 to 250,000 population. Based on a provision standard of one sports ground per 250,000 population and the population of Hong Kong in 2020, Audit estimated that there could be a shortfall of 4.6 sports grounds (paras. 1.8 and 2.2).

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3. ***Room for improvement in measuring usage rate of sports grounds.*** According to the Controlling Officer's Reports of LCSD, the average usage rate of sports grounds in each year was 99% (exceeding the target of 95%) from 2016 to 2020. According to LCSD, the average usage rate of sports grounds aims at measuring the utilisation of track and field facilities of sports grounds (para. 2.3). Audit examined the calculation of average usage rate of sports grounds from 2016 to 2020 and noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to continue to take into account usage rate of a sports ground for its main function in future planning.*** When a sports ground is not hired for exclusive use, its running track is open to the public for jogging. Audit noted that usage by joggers accounted for over 80% of the total usage of sports grounds. The average usage rate of sports grounds reported in LCSD's Controlling Officer's Reports did not reflect the usage rate of a sports ground for its main function (i.e. to provide venues for educational institutes and other relevant organisations to hold athletic events) (paras. 1.11 and 2.5); and
- (b) ***Need to compile statistics on the number of joggers.*** Audit noted that, in calculating the average usage rate of sports grounds, LCSD did not take into consideration the actual number of joggers and the capacity of the running tracks. LCSD also did not require staff of sports grounds to compile statistics on the number of joggers. Between June and August 2021, Audit visited three sports grounds, i.e. the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground for inspections and examined their records. Audit found that while staff of the Sha Tin Sports Ground maintained hourly statistics on the number of joggers, staff of the other two sports grounds did not regularly maintain such statistics (para. 2.6).

4. ***Need to keep in view progress of redevelopment projects under the 5-year plan.*** The 2017 Policy Address announced the "Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities" (5-year plan) to launch projects between 2017 and 2022 to develop new and improve existing sports and recreation facilities. Under the 5-year plan, among other sports and recreation facilities, the Government would redevelop the Yuen Long Stadium, and conduct technical feasibility studies for redeveloping the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Hong Kong Stadium. According to LCSD, as of November 2021, the three projects were on-going (paras. 1.9(a) and 2.9).

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5. ***Provision of facilities.*** Various facilities are provided in LCSD sports grounds, including running tracks, field facilities, in-field turf pitches, and other ancillary facilities (para. 2.12). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to closely monitor implementation progress of enhancement and improvement measures for drainage and irrigation systems.*** Since 2015, through regular inspections, LCSD has identified that the drainage and irrigation systems of 23 sports grounds with in-field turf pitches/areas should be enhanced. As of August 2021, the long-term enhancement and short-term improvement measures for the drainage system, and enhancement measures for the irrigation system had been completed/implemented in only 3, 20 and 14 sports grounds respectively (paras. 2.14 and 2.15);
- (b) ***Need to consider stepping up replacement of bubbler-type water dispensers.*** According to LCSD, water dispensers are provided in its leisure venues to enable the public to drink water after exercising. In addition, provision of water dispensers also helps reduce consumption of one-time plastic bottles and hence reduce waste at source. As of November 2021, a total of 99 water dispensers were provided in the 25 sports grounds. Of these 99 water dispensers, 4 (4%) were the bottle-filler type for filling water into bottles (Type A), 55 (56%) were the bubbler type for on-the-spot drinking (Type B), and 40 (40%) were the bottle-filler/bubbler type for both filling water into bottles and for on-the-spot drinking (Type C). Audit noted that:
 - (i) while Type A water dispenser was the most preferable as it addressed the concerns on bubbler contamination, only 4 (4%) of the 99 water dispensers provided in LCSD sports grounds were of this type;
 - (ii) 8 (32%) of the 25 sports grounds were provided with Type B water dispensers only; and
 - (iii) due to the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the use of all water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds had been suspended since 29 January 2020. On 26 September 2020, the use of bottle fillers of 12 (12%) of the 99 water dispensers was resumed (paras. 2.18 to 2.20); and

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- (c) ***Need to keep under review the enhancement of running tracks in two sports grounds.*** According to LCSD, it keeps constant review of the conditions of running tracks in its sports grounds. When defects are found, it will request the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) to conduct repair or refurbishment works as appropriate. Of the 25 sports grounds, as of August 2021, running track refurbishment works of 15 sports grounds were completed between 2012 and 2021, 2 were on-going, and 6 were planned for commencement between September 2021 and March 2024. For the remaining 2 sports grounds, LCSD informed Audit in October 2021 that:
- (i) for the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground, ArchSD was working on the details of an in-field turf pitch upgrading programme, including the provision of new track facilities to tie in with the new pitch; and
 - (ii) for the Fanling Recreation Ground with a concrete-paved running track, due to the presence of numerous manhole covers, laying of an all-weather athletic track without relocating the manhole covers was not feasible. LCSD had requested ArchSD to explore if there were any other suitable paving materials (paras. 2.22 and 2.23).

Operational matters

6. ***Booking and allocation.*** LCSD sports grounds can be hired for athletic meets, training and other sports activities. Schools and organisations can hire the whole sports ground or the in-field turf pitch, whereas individuals can only hire the in-field turf pitch. LCSD booking guidelines set out the procedures for application, and the related payment and cancellation arrangements. Audit examined the records of 150 cases of successful applications between 2016 and 2020 by schools and organisations for using three sports grounds, i.e. the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground (paras. 1.11, 3.3 and 3.6), and noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to review requirements on submitting applications.*** According to LCSD booking guidelines, schools and organisations shall use designated application forms to book a sports ground or its in-field turf pitch. Information of two responsible persons should be included in the application form. Audit noted that in 66 (44%) of the 150 cases, the applicants did not use the designated application forms, and in

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19 (13%) cases, the applicants did not provide any information on the responsible persons (paras. 3.4(a) and 3.7);

- (b) ***Need to handle cancellation of bookings in accordance with guidelines.*** According to LCSD booking guidelines, for cancellation of confirmed bookings, a hirer shall notify LCSD at least 20 days in advance of the date of use and provide justifications for the cancellation. If a hirer does not notify LCSD of the cancellation at least 20 days in advance or does not show up at the venue (i.e. no-show), LCSD will request the hirer to provide written justifications. If no written justification is provided or LCSD is not satisfied with the justifications, LCSD will issue a default notice to the hirer. Audit noted that of the 150 cases, 22 (15%) involved cancellation or no-show. Of these 22 cases, only in 4 (18%) cases had the hirers notified LCSD of the cancellation more than 20 days in advance. In 17 of the remaining 18 cases, there were no records showing that the cancellation or no-show had been properly handled in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines (paras. 3.11 and 3.12); and
- (c) ***Need to ensure that monthly registers are prepared and checked.*** In order to maintain the quality of natural turf, LCSD limits the usage of the in-field turf pitches in 22 sports grounds with natural turf pitches. In general, the maximum number of 90-minute sessions for using an in-field turf pitch is 60 (maximum available sessions) per month. According to LCSD booking guidelines, only 30 of the 60 sessions shall be allocated to schools and organisations (i.e. at least 30 sessions shall be allocated for individual bookings). The monthly maximum available sessions allocated to schools and organisations may be adjusted based on the conditions of the in-field turf pitches and local demand. A monthly register of bookings for using the in-field turf pitches by schools and organisations shall be prepared for necessary control and follow-up actions. Audit found that in the period between January 2016 and December 2020 (60 months):
 - (i) for the Aberdeen Sports Ground, there were no records on the monthly registers; and
 - (ii) for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground, while available sessions allocated to schools and organisations exceeded 30 on a number of occasions, the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations were not documented (paras. 1.6 and 3.13 to 3.15).

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7. ***Need to maintain proper check-in records.*** According to LCSD, check-in registers shall be maintained in each sports ground to record the taking up of booked sessions for using the sports ground and the in-field turf pitch. Audit examined the check-in registers of three sports grounds (see para. 6) in the period between January 2016 and December 2020 (60 months) and found that check-in registers were only available for some periods (ranging from 3 to 45 months) (paras. 3.20 and 3.21).

8. ***Different practices of concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track.*** With effect from 1 October 2002, to provide adequate buffer for safety of users, only the outer three lanes of the running track can be used for jogging when ball games are conducted in the in-field turf pitch of a sports ground. However, Audit noted that, in response to local demand, the outer four lanes (instead of three) of the running tracks in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground could be used for jogging since February 2010 and February 2011 respectively (para. 3.25).

Venue management

9. ***Management of facilities.*** Between June and August 2021, Audit examined the management of various facilities of three sports grounds (see para. 6) and found room for improvement (para. 4.3). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Room for improvement in inventory management.*** LCSD guidelines on inventory management set out the requirements on conducting stocktakes. Audit noted that LCSD staff conducted stocktakes between 2017 and 2021 (up to June) in the three sports grounds as required and no irregularities were identified. However, Audit conducted a sample stocktake of 60 inventory items in the three sports grounds and noted that:
 - (i) there were discrepancies in 35 (58%) of the 60 items;
 - (ii) only 2 items were labelled with identification codes; and
 - (iii) no information on the storing locations of the items was kept on the inventory lists (paras. 4.4 and 4.5);

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- (b) ***Room for improvement in provision of equipment for emergency uses.*** Equipment for emergency uses, such as first-aid boxes and automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), is provided in LCSD sports grounds. Audit examined the provision of such equipment in the three sports grounds and noted the following non-compliance with LCSD guidelines on provision of first-aid equipment and AEDs in one or more of the three sports grounds:

- (i) some items were not provided in the first-aid rooms and first-aid boxes;
- (ii) lists of items with respective expiry dates were not displayed beside all first-aid boxes;
- (iii) daily inspections on AEDs were not always conducted between July 2020 and June 2021; and
- (iv) notices showing AED locations were not conspicuously displayed (paras. 4.7 to 4.9); and

- (c) ***Scope for better use of spaces.*** Audit examined the use of spaces in the three sports grounds and noted that in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground:

- (i) of the 15 storerooms, 1 was used for storing sundry items and another was used for storing boxes of old records, some of which were closed about 22 years ago; and
- (ii) one accessible toilet on the first floor was locked and not open for public use. According to LCSD, the accessible toilet had not been used for years (para. 4.10).

10. ***Room for improvement in reporting and monitoring of maintenance works.*** The maintenance of building components, and electrical and mechanical equipment in LCSD sports grounds is performed by ArchSD, and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department respectively. LCSD guidelines on maintenance of leisure facilities set out guidance on reporting of defects and monitoring of maintenance works. Between June and August 2021, Audit visited three sports grounds (see para. 6) and examined the records of maintenance works. Audit noted that:

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- (a) all the three sports grounds recorded maintenance works on maintenance works registers. While a register of standard format with different fields was adopted in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, no similar register of standard format was adopted in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground;
- (b) of the 779 maintenance works requests made between January and December 2020, information (e.g. identification date of defects and completion date of works) recorded in 298 (38%) requests was inadequate for taking follow-up actions; and
- (c) for the period between January 2016 and August 2021, there was no record on outstanding maintenance works. However, Audit noted that two sets of solar water heating systems (for supplementary water pre-heating purpose) were reported out of order in April 2017 in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and follow-up actions were taken in 2019 and 2020 (paras. 4.18 to 4.20).

11. ***Room for improvement in conducting inspections.*** LCSD inspection guidelines set out the objectives and requirements on inspections of sports grounds. The objectives of conducting inspections include ensuring that the relevant guidelines, procedures and code of practice are properly followed and implemented, and the facilities are safe, clean and serviceable for use by the public. Audit examined the records on the inspections conducted between 2017 and 2021 (up to June) in the three sports grounds (see para. 6) and noted that:

- (a) the supervisory inspection records of 2019 in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and those of 2020 in the Sha Tin Sports Ground were not available for audit examination;
- (b) the required frequencies of supervisory inspections were not always met and the justifications for not conducting or reducing the frequency of inspections were not documented; and
- (c) no checklists were provided to facilitate sports ground staff to conduct the daily inspections. An exceptional reporting approach was adopted and only occasional records were found, leaving no trail of the follow-up actions taken (paras. 4.24 and 4.25).

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Audit recommendations

12. Audit recommendations are made in the respective sections of this Audit Report. Only the key ones are highlighted in this Executive Summary. Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

Planning and provision

- (a) continue to take into account the usage rate of a sports ground for its main function in future planning of sports grounds (para. 2.7(a));
- (b) require LCSD staff to regularly maintain statistics on the number of joggers using running tracks of sports grounds (para. 2.7(b));
- (c) keep in view the progress of the redevelopment projects for LCSD sports grounds under the 5-year plan and take measures to ensure their timely completion (para. 2.10);
- (d) closely monitor the implementation progress of the enhancement and improvement measures for the drainage and irrigation systems in the in-field turf pitches/areas of LCSD sports grounds (para. 2.24(a));
- (e) consider stepping up the replacement of Type B water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds (para. 2.24(c));
- (f) closely monitor the progress of the in-field turf pitch upgrading programme (including the provision of new track facilities) in the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground, and continue to explore the feasibility of replacing the concrete-paved running track in the Fanling Recreation Ground by suitable paving materials (para. 2.24(e));

Operational matters

- (g) review the objectives and effectiveness of the requirement to submit designated application forms for using LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches, and streamline the application procedures as appropriate (para. 3.16(a));

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- (h) ensure that the requirement to provide information on responsible persons in submitting applications is complied with (para. 3.16(b));
- (i) ensure compliance by hirers with the 20 days' advance notification requirement on cancellation of bookings for using sports grounds and in-field turf pitches (para. 3.16(e));
- (j) remind LCSD staff to request written justifications from hirers in case of booking cancellation and no-show as appropriate, maintain proper records on LCSD's acceptance or otherwise of the justifications, and issue default notices when necessary (para. 3.16(f));
- (k) remind LCSD staff to prepare monthly registers on the use of in-field turf pitches in LCSD sports grounds by schools and organisations (para. 3.16(g));
- (l) ensure that the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations for using in-field turf pitches in LCSD sports grounds are documented (para. 3.16(h));
- (m) ensure that check-in records are properly maintained in all LCSD sports grounds in future (para. 3.23(a));
- (n) conduct a review on the current arrangements of concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track in LCSD sports grounds (para. 3.26);

Venue management

- (o) take improvement measures in inventory management in LCSD sports grounds as appropriate (para. 4.16(a) and (b));
- (p) ensure that the guidelines on the provision of first-aid equipment and AEDs are complied with in all LCSD sports grounds (para. 4.16(c));

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- (q) **review whether the two storerooms and the accessible toilet in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground can be put into more gainful uses (para. 4.16(d));**
- (r) **enhance record keeping on maintenance works in LCSD sports grounds as appropriate (para. 4.22(a) and (c)); and**
- (s) **review and update the inspection requirements with a view to achieving the objectives of LCSD inspections (para. 4.26(a)).**

Response from the Government

13. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This PART describes the background to the audit and outlines the audit objectives and scope.

Background

1.2 The Government is committed to promoting the development of sports in Hong Kong. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) is responsible for the promotion and implementation of the Government's objectives in sports development, namely to promote sports in the community, support elite sports development and promote Hong Kong as a centre for major sports events. In order to encourage and facilitate sports participation by the public, and to promote the further development of sports, HAB is developing various types of sports and recreation facilities. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides support to HAB in the planning, provision and management of sports and recreation facilities. The major sports facilities managed by LCSD include sports grounds, turf pitches, tennis courts, indoor sports centres, swimming pools, and parks and playgrounds.

Sports grounds managed by LCSD

1.3 According to LCSD, in general, a sports ground contains facilities for athletic track and field events and an in-field grassed area which is also suitable for football matches. While the main function of sports grounds is to provide venues for educational institutes (e.g. primary and secondary schools) and other relevant organisations to hold athletic events, sports grounds are also used for playing football including professional league matches. As of August 2021, LCSD managed 25 sports grounds, including 4 on the Hong Kong Island, 5 in Kowloon, 15 in the New Territories and 1 on the Islands (Note 1).

Note 1: *LCSD sports grounds are designated as public pleasure grounds under section 106 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). The management and control of all public pleasure grounds (including sports grounds) designated under the Ordinance are vested in the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services. Apart from sports grounds, sports facilities are also provided in other public pleasure grounds (e.g. parks and gardens, and sports centres).*

Introduction

1.4 ***Type I and Type II sports grounds.*** A running track and various field events facilities (e.g. long jump runway and sand-pit, and throwing cage with safety net) are provided in each LCSD sports ground. Depending on the size of the running track, LCSD sports grounds are classified into two types:

- (a) ***Type I (18 of the 25 sports grounds).*** Type I sports grounds are provided with an 8-lane running track of 400 metres (m) each; and
- (b) ***Type II (7 of the 25 sports grounds).*** Type II sports grounds are provided with a running track of less than 8 lanes or of lanes less than 400 m.

Table 1 shows a list of LCSD sports grounds (as of August 2021) and Photograph 1 shows examples of sports facilities in the Tsing Yi Sports Ground.

Table 1

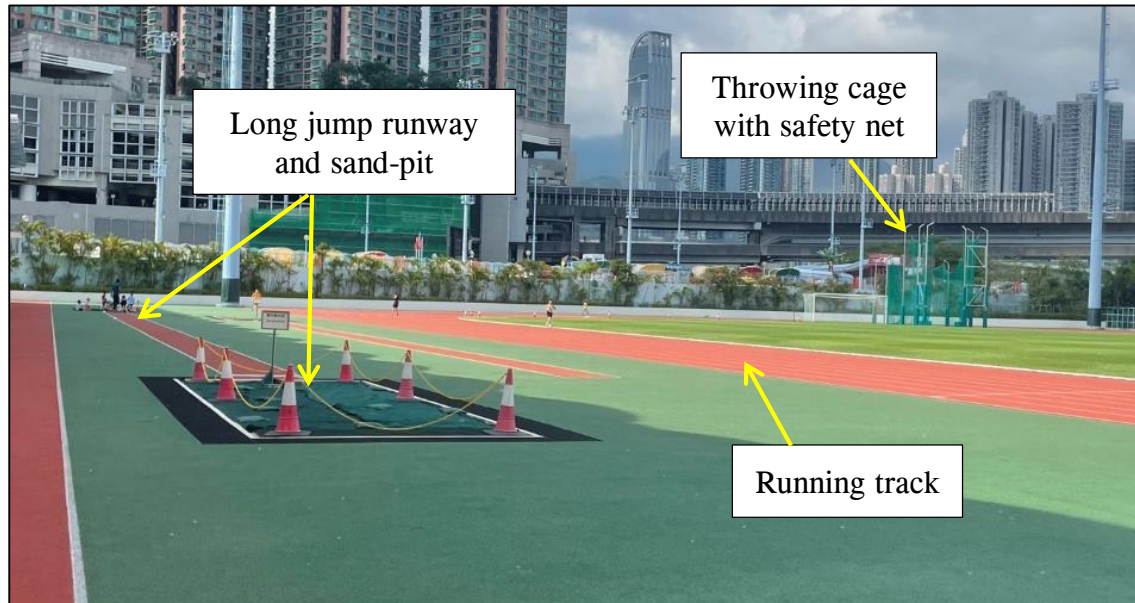
**LCSD sports grounds
(August 2021)**

Sports ground	Type
<i>Hong Kong Island</i>	
1. Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground	I
2. Wan Chai Sports Ground	I
3. Aberdeen Sports Ground	II
4. Causeway Bay Sports Ground	II
<i>Kowloon</i>	
5. Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground	I
6. Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	I
7. Kowloon Tsai Sports Ground	I
8. Sham Shui Po Sports Ground	I
9. Perth Street Sports Ground	II
<i>New Territories</i>	
10. Kwai Chung Sports Ground	I
11. Ma On Shan Sports Ground	I
12. North District Sports Ground	I
13. Sai Kung Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground	I
14. Sha Tin Sports Ground	I
15. Shing Mun Valley Sports Ground	I
16. Tai Po Sports Ground	I
17. Tin Shui Wai Sports Ground	I
18. Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground	I
19. Tsing Yi Sports Ground	I
20. Tuen Mun Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground	I
21. Yuen Long Stadium	I
22. Fanling Recreation Ground	II
23. Siu Lun Sports Ground	II
24. Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground	II
<i>Islands</i>	
25. Cheung Chau Sports Ground	II

Source: LCSD records

Photograph 1

Examples of sports facilities in the Tsing Yi Sports Ground



Source: Photograph taken by the Audit Commission's staff in May 2021

1.5 ***LCSD sports grounds provided for use as competition and training venues.*** Apart from providing venues for educational institutes and other relevant organisations to hold athletic events (see para. 1.3), some LCSD sports grounds are also used by national sports associations (NSAs) as national squad training centres and/or as football competition or training venues for the Hong Kong Premier League (HKPL) (see Table 2).

Table 2

**LCSD sports grounds provided for use as competition and training venues
(August 2021)**

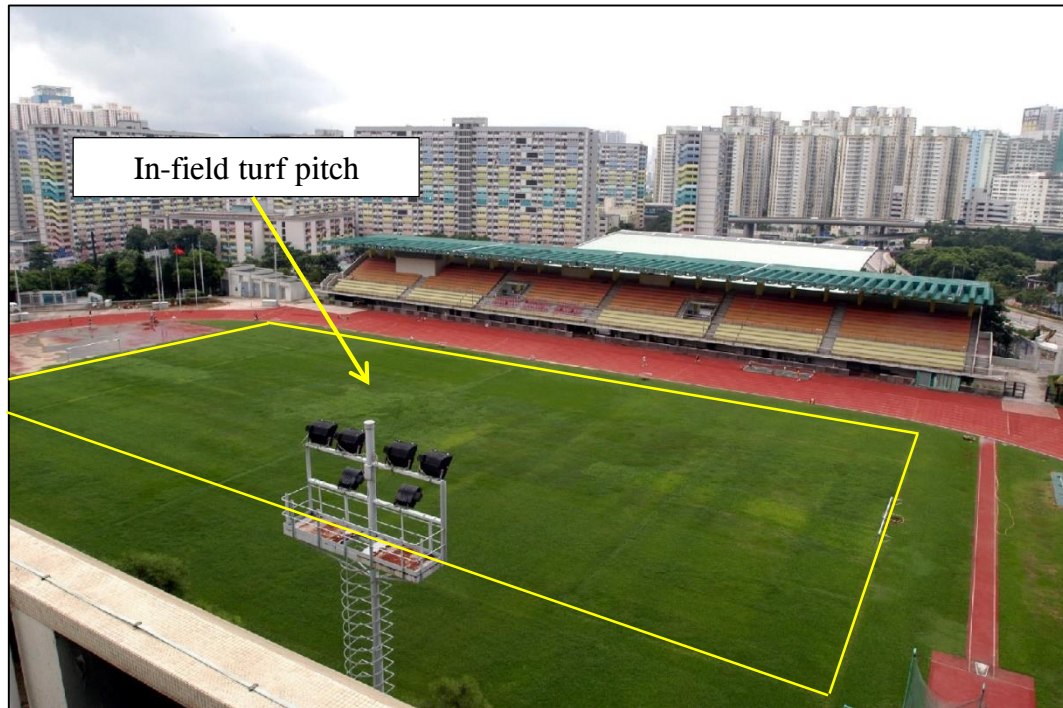
Use of sports ground	Sports ground
National squad training centre	Sha Tin Sports Ground
	Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground
	Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground
	Wan Chai Sports Ground
HKPL competition venue	Aberdeen Sports Ground
	Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground
	Sham Shui Po Sports Ground
	Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground
	Tsing Yi Sports Ground
	Yuen Long Stadium
HKPL standby competition venue	Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground
	Tai Po Sports Ground
	Tuen Mun Tang Siu Kin Sports Ground
HKPL training venue	Kowloon Tsai Sports Ground

Source: LCSD records

1.6 ***In-field turf pitches.*** Natural turf pitches (see Photograph 2 for an example) are provided in 22 of the 25 sports grounds in the area enclosed by the running tracks (i.e. in-field turf pitches) for conducting ball games (e.g. football). For the remaining 3 sports grounds, the in-field area is either a turf area for field events only (i.e. the Wan Chai Sports Ground) or for field events and leisure uses (i.e. the Perth Street Sports Ground), or a hard-surface pitch for playing football (i.e. the Cheung Chau Sports Ground).

Photograph 2

In-field turf pitch in the Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground



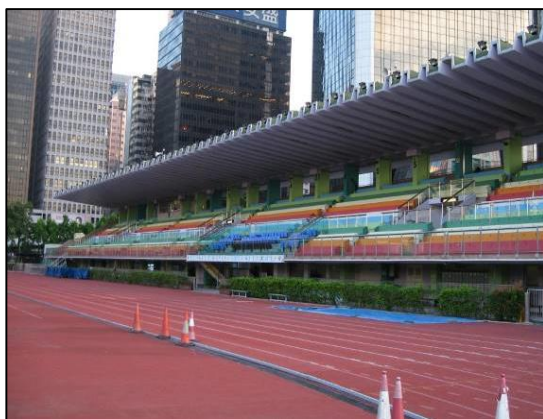
Source: LCSD records

1.7 ***Other facilities.*** To facilitate holding of sporting events, LCSD sports grounds are equipped with other ancillary facilities, such as spectator stands, electronic scoreboards, floodlights, first-aid rooms, changing rooms and lockers, record keeping rooms, refreshment kiosks and car parks. Photographs 3(a) to (f) show examples of these facilities.

Photographs 3(a) to (f)

Examples of other facilities in LCSD sports grounds

(a) Spectator stands



(b) Electronic scoreboard



(c) First-aid room



(d) Changing room and lockers



(e) Refreshment kiosk



(f) Car park



Source: LCSD records

Planning and provision of LCSD sports grounds

1.8 ***Planning and provision of sports grounds by the Government.*** LCSD provides support to HAB in the planning, provision and management of sports grounds. According to LCSD, in planning new sports facilities or improvement works, it makes reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) and takes into account other relevant considerations such as usage rates of existing facilities and demographic changes. According to HKPSG, in urban areas and new towns, the standard of provision is one sports ground per 200,000 to 250,000 population.

1.9 ***New sports grounds and redevelopment of existing sports grounds.*** As of August 2021, the Government had the following development and redevelopment plans for sports grounds:

- (a) ***“Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities” (5-year plan).*** The 2017 Policy Address announced the 5-year plan to launch projects between 2017 and 2022 to develop new and improve existing sports and recreation facilities (Note 2). Under the 5-year plan, among other sports and recreation facilities, the Government would:
 - (i) redevelop the Yuen Long Stadium;
 - (ii) develop a new sports ground in Tuen Mun;
 - (iii) conduct a technical feasibility study for redeveloping the Aberdeen Sports Ground; and
 - (iv) conduct another technical feasibility study for redeveloping the Hong Kong Stadium; and

Note 2: *According to the 5-year plan, the Government would launch 26 projects to develop new and improve existing sports and recreation facilities and conduct technical feasibility studies for another 15 sports and recreation facility projects to prepare for their implementation in the future.*

- (b) ***New sports ground in Kai Tak.*** In June 2017, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved a funding of \$31.9 billion to develop the Kai Tak Sports Park. In December 2018, a 25-year design-build-operate contract was awarded to develop the sports park with a main stadium, an indoor sports centre and a public sports ground. The design-build-operate contract commenced in February 2019. The construction works of the sports park commenced in April 2019 for completion in 2023.

1.10 ***Consultancy study on provision of sports facilities in Hong Kong.*** To ensure that the planning of sports and recreation facilities can meet the needs of the public, the Sports Commission (Note 3) established a working group to review the level of demand for various types of sports facilities (including sports grounds). On the advice of the working group, in 2017, HAB commissioned a consultant to assess the demand and supply of sports facilities in Hong Kong and to make recommendations on future provision of these facilities. According to HAB, the consultancy study was almost completed as of November 2021 and it will take appropriate follow-up actions with reference to the recommendations of the study.

Hiring of LCSD sports grounds

1.11 LCSD sports grounds can be hired for athletic meets, training and other sports activities. Schools and organisations (Note 4) can hire the whole sports ground or the in-field turf pitch, whereas individuals can only hire the in-field turf pitch

Note 3: *The Sports Commission was established in 2005 with members appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs. The terms of reference of the Sports Commission are to advise the Government on:*

- (a) *the policies, strategies and implementation framework for sports development in Hong Kong; and*
- (b) *the provision of funding and resources in support of sports development in Hong Kong, taking into account the input from various stakeholders in sports through partnership and collaboration.*

Note 4: *Organisations generally include the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, NSAs, subvented non-governmental organisations, organisations exempted from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112), public or statutory bodies, and bona fide associations and corporations endorsed by LCSD.*

Introduction

(Note 5). Sports grounds can be hired on an hourly basis, and in-field turf pitches can be hired on a 90-minute session basis (unless otherwise stated, hourly sessions for using sports grounds and 90-minute sessions for using in-field turf pitch are hereinafter collectively referred to as sessions). According to LCSD, when a sports ground is not hired for exclusive use (e.g. hiring of the whole sports ground by a school for holding a sports day), its running track is open to the public for jogging with a view to utilising public resources more effectively (Note 6), except when it is closed for maintenance or other reasons (e.g. adverse weather). When only the in-field turf pitch is hired, the outer lanes of the running track are also open to the public for jogging.

1.12 ***Booking of LCSD sports grounds by schools and organisations.*** Sessions for using LCSD sports grounds can be reserved by schools one school year (Note 7) in advance and by organisations three to twelve months in advance. Bookings shall be made by submitting designated application forms to individual venues. The sessions will be allocated according to the priority preset by LCSD (Note 8).

1.13 ***Booking of in-field turf pitches.*** Schools, organisations and individuals can hire the in-field turf pitches. According to LCSD:

Note 5: *According to LCSD, individuals can hire the in-field turf pitches in 19 of the 22 sports grounds with in-field turf pitches (see para. 1.6). Only schools and organisations can hire the in-field turf pitches in the remaining 3 sports grounds (i.e. the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Causeway Bay Sports Ground and the Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground).*

Note 6: *An exception is the Wan Chai Sports Ground which is only open when hired.*

Note 7: *A school year runs from September of a year to August of the following year.*

Note 8: *In general, school athletic meets, training and sports activities during school hours have a higher priority over events organised by organisations. If more than one application for the same session from applicants of the same priority are received, negotiation will be conducted among the applicants. If the negotiation is futile, allocation will be determined by ballot.*

- (a) for schools and organisations, bookings can be made in advance (one school year in advance for schools and three to twelve months in advance for organisations) with designated application forms submitted to individual venues. The sessions will be allocated according to the priority preset by LCSD (Note 9); and
- (b) for individuals, bookings can be made through LCSD on-line booking system (i.e. the Leisure Link Electronic Service System) 14 days in advance and allocation will be determined by on-line balloting. Sessions not taken up by schools, organisations and individuals after on-line balloting will be allocated 10 days in advance on a first-come-first-served basis.

1.14 **Hire charges.** Use of LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches is subject to payment of prescribed hire charges. Users will need to pay additional charges for using some optional items (e.g. floodlights, electronic timing equipment, starting pistols and walkie-talkies, and electronic scoreboards). Table 3 summarises the hire charges of LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches as of August 2021.

Note 9: *In general, schools and organisations have a higher priority over individuals in booking in-field turf pitches. If more than one application for the same session from applicants of the same priority are received, negotiation will be conducted among the applicants. If the negotiation is futile, allocation will be determined by ballot.*

Table 3

**Hire charges of LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches
(August 2021)**

	Rate	
	Type I sports ground	Type II sports ground
Hire charges for an LCSD sports ground	\$280 per hour \$1,100 per half day \$1,820 per day	\$140 per hour \$560 per half day \$910 per day
Hire charges for optional item		
Floodlight	\$100 per hour	\$50 per hour
Electronic timing equipment, starting pistol and walkie-talkie	\$105/\$25 per hour (Note 1)	
Electronic scoreboard	\$235/\$160/\$60 per hour (Note 2)	
Hire charges for an in-field turf pitch		
With floodlight	\$288 per 90 minutes	
Without floodlight	\$168 per 90 minutes	

Source: LCSD records

Note 1: The rate is:

- (a) \$105 per hour for the Wan Chai Sports Ground, the Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground and the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground; and
- (b) \$25 per hour for all other sports grounds.

Note 2: The rate is:

- (a) \$235 per hour for the Wan Chai Sports Ground, the Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground and the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground;
- (b) \$160 per hour for other sports grounds in the New Territories; and
- (c) \$60 per hour for other sports grounds on the Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon.

Remarks: Schools, non-governmental organisations and organisations for persons with disabilities are eligible for half-rate concessionary hire charges. For profit-making events (e.g. events with ticket sales), higher hire charges will apply.

Responsible divisions of LCSD

1.15 The three Leisure Services Divisions under the Leisure Services Branch of LCSD are responsible for the planning, provision and management of sports grounds in the three geographical areas of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories and Islands respectively. Various offices/sections (e.g. the District Leisure Services Offices, the Land-based Venues Section, the Sports Turf Management Section (STMS) and the Development Section) under the three Leisure Services Divisions provide support to the operation and management of sports grounds. An extract of the organisation chart of LCSD (as at 31 March 2021) is at Appendix A. According to LCSD, in 2020-21, the expenditure incurred in operation and management of LCSD sports grounds (including in-field turf pitches) amounted to about \$213 million.

Audit review

1.16 In May 2021, the Audit Commission (Audit) commenced a review of the provision and management of LCSD sports grounds. The audit review has focused on the following areas:

- (a) planning and provision (PART 2);
- (b) operational matters (PART 3); and
- (c) venue management (PART 4).

Audit has found room for improvement in the above areas and has made a number of recommendations to address the issues.

General response from the Government

1.17 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations.

Acknowledgement

1.18 Audit would like to acknowledge with gratitude the full cooperation of the staff of LCSD during the course of the audit review.

PART 2: PLANNING AND PROVISION

2.1 This PART examines the planning and provision of LCSD sports grounds, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) usage rate (paras. 2.2 to 2.8);
- (b) redevelopment projects (paras. 2.9 to 2.11); and
- (c) provision of facilities (paras. 2.12 to 2.25).

Usage rate

2.2 HKPSG adopts a population-based standard in the provision for sports grounds, which is one sports ground per 200,000 to 250,000 population (see para. 1.8 — Note 10). Based on a provision standard of one sports ground per 250,000 population and the population of Hong Kong in 2020, Audit estimated that there could be a shortfall of 4.6 sports grounds (Note 11). The consultant engaged by HAB (see para. 1.10) also projected that, based on a provision standard of one sports ground per 250,000 population, by year 2026, there would be a shortfall of 4 sports grounds after taking into account the provision of the 2 new sports grounds in Tuen Mun and Kai Tak (see para. 1.9(a)(ii) and (b)). According to LCSD, in planning new sports facilities or improvement works, it makes reference to HKPSG and takes into account other relevant considerations such as usage rates of existing facilities and demographic changes (see para. 1.8).

Note 10: *According to HKPSG, the planning standards and guidelines should be applied with a degree of flexibility, having regard to land use demands, local conditions, development constraints and resource availability.*

Note 11: *According to the Census and Statistics Department, the population of Hong Kong was about 7.396 million in 2020. Applying HKPSG's standard, 29.6 sports grounds would be required (i.e. 7.396 million ÷ 250,000). Compared with the existing provision of 25 sports grounds, it is estimated that there could be a shortfall of 4.6 sports grounds.*

Room for improvement in measuring usage rate of sports grounds

2.3 According to the Controlling Officer's Reports of LCSD, the average usage rate of sports grounds in each year (Note 12) was 99% (exceeding the target of 95%) from 2016 to 2020. According to LCSD, the average usage rate of sports grounds aims at measuring the utilisation of track and field facilities of sports grounds and hence does not cover the use of in-field turf pitches for conducting ball games (see para. 1.6), for which separate usage statistics are maintained (Note 13). Audit examination of the calculation of average usage rate of sports grounds has found room for improvement to facilitate future planning, as illustrated in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.4 ***Breakdown of average usage rate by different users.*** Audit analysed LCSD statistics on the average usage rate of sports grounds by different users for the period from 2016 to 2020 (see Table 4).

Note 12: *According to LCSD, the average usage rate of sports grounds in a year is calculated by the following formula:*

$$\frac{\text{Total number of hours used in the 25 sports grounds in a year}}{\text{Total number of available hours for use in the 25 sports grounds in a year}} \times 100\%$$

Note 13: *According to LCSD statistics, the average usage rate of in-field turf pitches ranged from 85% to 94% from 2016 to 2020.*

Table 4
Breakdown of average usage rate of sports grounds by users
(2016 to 2020)

Year	Breakdown by users			Average usage rate (d) = (a) + (b) + (c)
	Schools (a)	Organisations (b)	Joggers (Note 1) (c)	
2016	10.6%	6.0%	82.9%	99.5%
2017	11.3%	6.5%	81.9%	99.7%
2018	10.6%	6.2%	82.8%	99.6%
2019	10.8%	6.2%	82.7%	99.7%
2020	1.4% (Note 2)	2.1% (Note 2)	96.3%	99.8%

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: When a sports ground is not hired for exclusive use, its running track is open to the public for jogging (see para. 1.11).

Note 2: According to LCSD, the sharp decrease in usage by schools and organisations in 2020 was due to cancellation of sporting events/training amid the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

2.5 Need to continue to take into account usage rate of a sports ground for its main function in future planning. According to LCSD, while sports grounds are sometimes used for football matches, their main function is to provide venues for educational institutes (e.g. primary and secondary schools) and other relevant organisations to hold athletic events (see para. 1.3). Audit noted that the average usage rate of sports grounds reported in LCSD's Controlling Officer's Reports reflected the overall usage rate of sports grounds. However, as usage by joggers accounted for over 80% of the total usage of sports grounds (see Table 4 in para. 2.4), the average usage rate did not reflect the usage rate of a sports ground for its main function (i.e. to provide venues for educational institutes and other relevant organisations to hold athletic events). According to LCSD, it has closely monitored the usage of sports grounds and reviewed from time to time the need of provision of sports grounds in accordance with HKPSG and has all along been taking into account the usage rate of a sports ground for its main function in planning sports grounds. Given the number of schools in Hong Kong and that athletic meets are held once every year per school on a school day (and usually during a particular season and on day time only), it is not possible to achieve a high usage rate for this main function based

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on the usage pattern of sports grounds by schools in Hong Kong. In Audit's view, LCSD should continue to take into account the usage rate of a sports ground for its main function in future planning of sports grounds.

2.6 *Need to compile statistics on the number of joggers.* Audit noted that, in calculating the average usage rate of sports grounds, LCSD did not take into consideration the actual number of joggers and the capacity of the running tracks. In this connection, Audit also noted that LCSD did not require staff of sports grounds to compile statistics on the number of joggers. Between June and August 2021, Audit visited three sports grounds, i.e. the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground for inspections and examined their records. Audit found that while staff of the Sha Tin Sports Ground maintained hourly statistics on the number of joggers (i.e. taking a snapshot of the number of joggers in the sports ground once an hour), staff of the other two sports grounds did not regularly maintain such statistics. In Audit's view, with a view to facilitating management of sports grounds such as manpower deployment, resource allocation and routine management, LCSD needs to require its staff to regularly maintain statistics on the number of joggers using running tracks of sports grounds.

Audit recommendations

2.7 *Audit has recommended that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:*

- (a) continue to take into account the usage rate of a sports ground for its main function in future planning of sports grounds; and**
- (b) require LCSD staff to regularly maintain statistics on the number of joggers using running tracks of sports grounds.**

Response from the Government

2.8 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that LCSD will require staff to regularly maintain statistics on the number of joggers using running tracks of sports grounds.

Redevelopment projects

Need to keep in view progress of redevelopment projects under the 5-year plan

2.9 Under the 5-year plan, between 2017 and 2022, the Government would launch projects to redevelop the Yuen Long Stadium, and conduct technical feasibility studies to redevelop the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Hong Kong Stadium (see para. 1.9(a)(i), (iii) and (iv)). According to LCSD, as of November 2021, the three projects under the 5-year plan were on-going with details as follows:

- (a) ***Project on redevelopment of the Yuen Long Stadium.*** The aim of the redevelopment was to upgrade the Yuen Long Stadium for hosting local and international football matches. In July 2018, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved a funding of \$45.4 million for the pre-construction activities (including design, site investigation works and minor studies, and preparation of tendering). The pre-construction activities commenced in April 2019, targeted for completion in the second quarter of 2022. Subject to funding approval, construction works would commence in 2022 for completion in 2026;
- (b) ***Technical feasibility study for redevelopment of the Aberdeen Sports Ground.*** Since 2017, LCSD had been coordinating with the relevant government bureaux/departments on the design requirements for redeveloping the sports ground. In November 2020, the Government decided to incorporate the redevelopment project into the “Invigorating Island South” initiative (Note 14). The preparation work for the technical feasibility study was underway as of November 2021; and
- (c) ***Technical feasibility study for redevelopment of the Hong Kong Stadium.*** With the upcoming completion of the Kai Tak Sports Park in 2023, the Hong Kong Stadium would be redeveloped into a sports ground with running track. The redeveloped Hong Kong Stadium could accommodate football matches, athletic meets and training needs of athletes. The running

Note 14: *As announced in the 2020 Policy Address, the Government would implement the “Invigorating Island South” initiative to develop the Southern District into a place full of vibrancy, vigour and velocity for people to work, live, explore new ideas and have fun. In February 2021, the Invigorating Island South Office was set up under the Development Bureau for the implementation of the initiative.*

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tracks would also be open to the public when the sports ground is not hired. Preliminary technical assessments had been conducted. The preparation work for the technical feasibility study was underway as of November 2021.

Audit considers that LCSD needs to keep in view the progress of the redevelopment projects and take measures to ensure their timely completion.

Audit recommendation

2.10 **Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should keep in view the progress of the redevelopment projects for LCSD sports grounds under the 5-year plan and take measures to ensure their timely completion.**

Response from the Government

2.11 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that LCSD will continue to implement the redevelopment projects according to the schedule of the 5-year plan, and work with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) to ensure their timely completion.

Provision of facilities

2.12 Various facilities are provided in LCSD sports grounds, including running tracks, field facilities, in-field turf pitches, and other ancillary facilities (see paras. 1.4, 1.6 and 1.7). Audit has found room for improvement in the provision of some facilities in LCSD sports grounds (see paras. 2.13 to 2.23).

Need to closely monitor implementation progress of enhancement and improvement measures for drainage and irrigation systems

2.13 ***Drainage and irrigation systems of natural turf pitches.*** In May 2014, LCSD established STMS (see para. 1.15) to provide professional advice and technical support for the management and maintenance of natural turf in its leisure venues. According to STMS, drainage and irrigation are the two fundamentals contributing to the good health and performance of natural turf (Note 15).

2.14 ***Enhancement of drainage and irrigation systems of the natural turf pitches/areas in LCSD sports grounds.*** STMS conducts regular inspections to all natural turf in LCSD leisure venues, including those in sports grounds. Since 2015, STMS has recommended that the drainage and irrigation systems of 23 of the 24 sports grounds (Note 16) with in-field turf pitches/areas (i.e. in-field turf pitches in 22 sports grounds and in-field turf areas in 2 sports grounds — see para. 1.6) should be enhanced, including:

- (a) ***Long-term enhancement measures for drainage system.*** In the long-term, sub-surface drainage pipes should be installed to drain excess water away from the turf;
- (b) ***Short-term improvement measures for drainage system.*** In the short-term, soil improvement measures should be taken to improve water infiltration capability of the turf, including:
 - (i) conducting solid-tine aeration monthly. Solid-tine aeration is a process of puncturing the turf surface at 0.15 m intervals following with the placement of quartz sand;
 - (ii) applying wetting agent bi-monthly to reduce the surface tension of water molecules which improve its capacity to infiltrate into the soil;

Note 15: *Other factors affecting health of turf include growing of weeds, pests and insects, and turf diseases (e.g. growing of moss and algae).*

Note 16: *According to STMS, the drainage and irrigation systems in the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground were considered effective and no enhancement was required.*

- (iii) conducting hollow-tine aeration quarterly. Hollow-tine aeration is a process of puncturing the turf surface with removal of small amount of soil at 0.15 m intervals. The holes will then be filled with quartz sand; and
- (iv) conducting an additional hollow-tine aeration during the summer maintenance period (Note 17); and
- (c) ***Enhancement measures for irrigation system.*** Due to deterioration of out-field irrigation guns/sprinklers and the effect of wind, water may not be able to spread evenly across the turf, resulting in inadequate irrigation in some areas. To improve the irrigation effectiveness, new irrigation system with greater water pressure and/or new irrigation guns/sprinklers should be installed.

2.15 *Implementation progress of enhancement and improvement measures for the drainage and irrigation systems.* As of August 2021, the recommended long-term enhancement and short-term improvement measures for the drainage system, and enhancement measures for the irrigation system had been completed/implemented in only 3, 20 and 14 sports grounds respectively, with details as follows:

- (a) installation of sub-surface drainage pipes (see para. 2.14(a)):
 - (i) had been completed for 3 sports grounds;
 - (ii) was on-going for 1 sports ground and the works were scheduled for completion in August 2022;
 - (iii) had been planned for 4 sports grounds and the works had not commenced yet. The target completion dates were between July 2022 and September 2023;
 - (iv) had not yet been planned for 13 sports grounds; and

Note 17: *According to STMS, apart from improving water infiltration, the process of aeration (i.e. solid-tine aeration and hollow-tine aeration) can also relieve soil compaction to allow air and nutrients to penetrate into the soil for better root growth.*

- (v) was put on hold for 2 sports grounds as there were other redevelopment/upgrading plans (Note 18);
- (b) soil improvement measures (see para. 2.14(b)) had been implemented for 20 sports grounds. For the remaining 3 sports grounds, apart from the additional hollow-tine aeration, other improvement measures had been implemented; and
- (c) installation of a new irrigation system (see para. 2.14(c)):
 - (i) had been completed for 14 sports grounds;
 - (ii) had been planned for 4 sports grounds and the works had not commenced yet. The target completion dates were between August 2022 and August 2024;
 - (iii) was under planning for 3 sports grounds. However, there were some technical problems to be solved (e.g. site constraints);
 - (iv) had not yet been planned for 1 sports ground; and
 - (v) was put on hold for 1 sports ground as the turf had been included in an upgrading programme (i.e. the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground — see Note 18 to (a)(v) above).

In Audit's view, LCSD needs to closely monitor the implementation progress of the enhancement and improvement measures for the drainage and irrigation systems in the in-field turf pitches/areas of LCSD sports grounds with a view to completing the works as soon as practicable.

Note 18: *The 2 sports grounds were the Yuen Long Stadium with on-going pre-construction activities for redevelopment (see para. 2.9(a)), and the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground with an on-going turf upgrading programme (see para. 2.23(a)).*

Need to continue to explore the use of hybrid turf in in-field turf pitches/areas

2.16 ***Advantages of hybrid turf.*** Hybrid turf is a new form of turf which consists of a mixture of natural and artificial turf. According to LCSD, despite its higher construction cost, hybrid turf may have the following advantages over natural turf:

- (a) less stringent maintenance requirement and hence increased usage time (i.e. more available sessions for use);
- (b) lower maintenance cost; and
- (c) improved durability.

2.17 ***Trial use of hybrid turf.*** LCSD has been studying the use of hybrid turf in its leisure venues, including the in-field turf pitches/areas in sports grounds. In April 2021, a pitch with hybrid turf in the Happy Valley Recreation Ground was open for trial use for one year. Upon enquiry, in June and August 2021, LCSD informed Audit that:

- (a) preliminary assessment on the trial was positive, and there was a potential to increase the number of available sessions for use of hybrid turf;
- (b) a survey was conducted to collect feedback from users of the trial hybrid turf between 3 April and 30 May 2021. Feedback from 168 users were collected. According to the survey, over 70% of the users were satisfied with the overall pitch condition; and
- (c) if hybrid turf was confirmed to be effective, LCSD would extend its use to other leisure venues.

In view of the advantages of hybrid turf over natural turf (see para. 2.16), the positive results of the preliminary assessment and positive feedback from users, Audit considers that LCSD needs to continue to explore the use of hybrid turf in the in-field turf pitches/areas of its sports grounds.

Room for improvement in provision of water dispensers

2.18 In the 2018 Policy Address, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region announced that the Government would install more water dispensers/filling stations in government venues to inculcate a “bring your own bottle” culture. According to LCSD, water dispensers are provided in its leisure venues to enable the public to drink water after exercising. In addition, provision of water dispensers also helps reduce consumption of one-time plastic bottles and hence reduce waste at source.

2.19 As of November 2021, a total of 99 water dispensers were provided in the 25 sports grounds. The types of water dispensers provided are as follows:

- (a) ***Type A (4 or 4% of the 99 water dispensers).*** Type A water dispenser is the bottle-filler type which can only be used to fill water into bottles (see Photograph 4(a) for an example);
- (b) ***Type B (55 or 56% of the 99 water dispensers).*** Type B water dispenser is the bubbler type which can only be used for on-the-spot drinking (see Photograph 4(b) for an example); and
- (c) ***Type C (40 or 40% of the 99 water dispensers).*** Type C water dispenser is the bottle-filler/bubbler type which can be used both to fill water into bottles and for on-the-spot drinking. According to LCSD, there are two kinds of Type C water dispensers, namely old Type C (32 or 32% of the 99 water dispensers — see Photograph 4(c) for an example) and new Type C (8 or 8% of the 99 water dispensers — see Photograph 4(d) for an example).

Table 5 shows the numbers of each type of water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds as of November 2021.

Photographs 4(a) to (d)

Examples of water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds

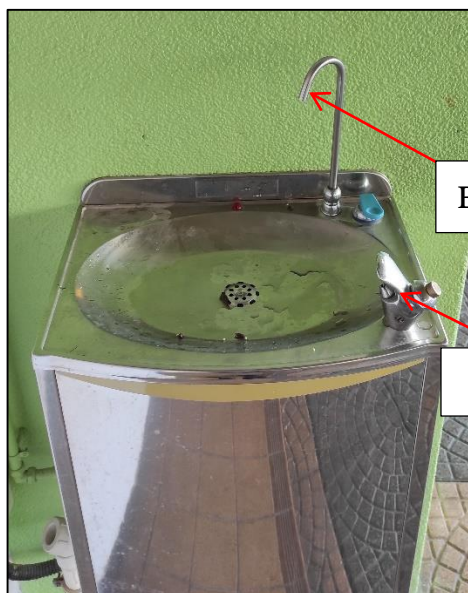
(a) Type A (bottle-filler type)



(b) Type B (bubbler type)



**(c) Old Type C
(bottle-filler/bubbler type)**



**(d) New Type C
(bottle-filler/bubbler type)**



Source: Photographs taken by Audit staff in July, August and October 2021

Table 5

Numbers and types of water dispensers provided in LCSD sports grounds
(November 2021)

Sports ground		Number of water dispensers				
		Type A	Type B	Type C		Total
				Old	New	
1	Tin Shui Wai Sports Ground	–	10	–	–	10
2	Tai Po Sports Ground	1	8	–	–	9
3	Aberdeen Sports Ground	1	3	–	2	6
4	North District Sports Ground	1	5	–	–	6
5	Shing Mun Valley Sports Ground	–	–	6	–	6
6	Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground	–	–	–	6	6
7	Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground	–	–	5	–	5
8	Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground	–	5	–	–	5
9	Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	–	–	4	–	4
10	Kowloon Tsai Sports Ground	–	1	3	–	4
11	Kwai Chung Sports Ground	–	1	3	–	4
12	Sham Shui Po Sports Ground	–	4	–	–	4
13	Wan Chai Sports Ground	–	2	2	–	4
14	Yuen Long Stadium	–	3	1	–	4
15	Siu Lun Sports Ground	–	3	–	–	3
16	Causeway Bay Sports Ground	–	1	1	–	2
17	Cheung Chau Sports Ground	–	2	–	–	2
18	Fanling Recreation Ground	1	1	–	–	2
19	Ma On Shan Sports Ground	–	–	2	–	2
20	Sai Kung Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground	–	2	–	–	2
21	Sha Tin Sports Ground	–	2	–	–	2
22	Tsing Yi Sports Ground	–	–	2	–	2
23	Tuen Mun Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground	–	2	–	–	2
24	Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground	–	–	2	–	2
25	Perth Street Sports Ground	–	–	1	–	1
Total		4 (4%)	55 (56%)	32 (32%)	8 (8%)	99 (100%)

Legend:  Sports grounds provided with Type B water dispensers only

Source: LCSD records

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2.20 *Need to consider stepping up replacement of bubbler-type water dispensers.* According to LCSD, Type A water dispenser was the most preferable as it addressed the concerns on bubbler contamination and new Type C water dispensers might be provided if there were genuine needs from venue users. Audit noted that:

- (a) while Type A water dispenser was the most preferable type, only 4 (4%) of the 99 water dispensers provided in LCSD sports grounds were of this type;
- (b) 8 (32%) of the 25 sports grounds were provided with Type B water dispensers only;
- (c) due to the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the use of all water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds had been suspended since 29 January 2020. On 26 September 2020, the use of Type A water dispensers and bottle fillers of new Type C water dispensers (i.e. 12 (4 Type A and 8 new Type C) or 12% of the 99 water dispensers) was resumed; and
- (d) LCSD did not have a replacement schedule for Type B water dispensers and, in general, all Type B water dispensers would be replaced by Type A or new Type C water dispensers when they were due for replacement.

In Audit's view, in light of concerns over bubbler contamination amid the COVID-19 epidemic, LCSD should consider stepping up the replacement of Type B water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds by Type A water dispensers as far as practicable, or by new Type C water dispensers if the risk of bubbler contamination can be mitigated.

2.21 *Need to review the provision of water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds.* As shown in Table 5 in paragraph 2.19, as of November 2021, the number of water dispensers provided in each of the 25 sports grounds ranged from 1 to 10. Upon enquiry, LCSD in August 2021 informed Audit that:

- (a) there was no standard requirement on the number of water dispensers to be provided in each sports ground;

- (b) the number of water dispensers provided in each sports ground depended on various factors, including the usage rate of the sports ground and suitability of installation locations; and
- (c) venue management would assess the genuine needs of users to determine the provision of water dispensers.

As water dispensers are provided to enable the public to drink water after exercising and help reduce consumption of one-time plastic bottles (see para. 2.18), Audit considers that LCSD needs to review the adequacy of water dispensers in its sports grounds and provide more water dispensers if necessary.

Need to keep under review the enhancement of running tracks in two sports grounds

2.22 According to LCSD, it keeps constant review of the conditions of running tracks in its sports grounds. When defects are found, it will request ArchSD to conduct repair or refurbishment works as appropriate. Audit noted that as of August 2021, of the 25 sports grounds:

- (a) running track refurbishment works of:
 - (i) 15 (60%) sports grounds were completed in the last 10 years (between 2012 and 2021);
 - (ii) 2 (8%) sports grounds were on-going; and
 - (iii) 6 (24%) sports grounds were planned for commencement between September 2021 and March 2024;
- (b) 1 (4%) sports ground (i.e. the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground) had its running track refurbished in 2003 (i.e. almost 18 years ago) and the running track appeared to be in dilapidated condition (see Photograph 5); and
- (c) a concrete-paved running track was provided in 1 (4%) sports ground (i.e. the Fanling Recreation Ground) while all-weather athletic tracks were provided in the remaining 24 sports grounds.

Photograph 5

Running track in the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground



Source: Photograph taken by Audit staff in September 2021

2.23 Upon enquiry, in October 2021, LCSD informed Audit that:

- (a) the replacement of the running track in the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground was originally planned to commence in mid-2021. However, as the in-field turf pitch in the sports ground had been included in an upgrading programme (i.e. to be upgraded from a 7-a-side to a standard 11-a-side football pitch), the planned running track replacement works were suspended. As of October 2021, ArchSD was working on the details of the in-field turf pitch upgrading programme, including the provision of new track facilities to tie in with the new pitch. The works were scheduled to commence in 2024 tentatively. In the meantime, LCSD was working closely with ArchSD to arrange patch repair as necessary to ensure safety of the public in using the running track; and
- (b) there were numerous manhole covers along the running track in the Fanling Recreation Ground. Laying of an all-weather athletic track without relocating the manhole covers was not feasible due to safety concerns. As the sports ground mainly served as a football pitch, an all-weather athletic track might not be necessary. Nevertheless, LCSD had requested ArchSD to explore if there were any other suitable paving materials for the venue.

To pursue incremental improvement to facilities in LCSD sports grounds, Audit considers that LCSD needs to closely monitor the progress of the in-field turf pitch upgrading programme (including the provision of new track facilities) in the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground, and continue to explore the feasibility of replacing the concrete-paved running track in the Fanling Recreation Ground by suitable paving materials.

Audit recommendations

2.24 **Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) closely monitor the implementation progress of the enhancement and improvement measures for the drainage and irrigation systems in the in-field turf pitches/areas of LCSD sports grounds with a view to completing the works as soon as practicable;**
- (b) continue to explore the use of hybrid turf in the in-field turf pitches/areas of LCSD sports grounds;**
- (c) consider stepping up the replacement of Type B water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds by Type A water dispensers as far as practicable, or by new Type C water dispensers if the risk of bubbler contamination can be mitigated;**
- (d) review the adequacy of water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds and provide more water dispensers if necessary; and**
- (e) closely monitor the progress of the in-field turf pitch upgrading programme (including the provision of new track facilities) in the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground, and continue to explore the feasibility of replacing the concrete-paved running track in the Fanling Recreation Ground by suitable paving materials.**

Response from the Government

2.25 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that LCSD will:

- (a) closely monitor the implementation progress of the improvement work for the drainage and irrigation systems in sports grounds through bi-monthly inspections and assist the venue staff in sorting out technical difficulties in the improvement work;
- (b) closely monitor the progress of the implementation of hybrid turf system in future projects such as the Kai Tak Sports Park, redevelopment of the Yuen Long Stadium and other future projects with turf construction, by giving advice on turf selection;
- (c) work closely with the relevant works agent to speed up the replacement of Type B water dispensers by Type A or new Type C water dispensers as far as practicable. LCSD targets to provide at least one Type A or new Type C water dispenser in each sports ground by the end of 2021-22;
- (d) review the provision of water dispensers in LCSD sports grounds; and
- (e) closely monitor the progress of in-field turf pitch upgrading programme (including the provision of new track facilities) in the Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground, and continue to explore the feasibility of replacing the concrete-paved running track in the Fanling Recreation Ground by suitable paving materials.

PART 3: OPERATIONAL MATTERS

3.1 This PART examines the operations of LCSD sports grounds, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) booking and allocation (paras. 3.3 to 3.17);
- (b) reporting of utilisation (paras. 3.18 to 3.24); and
- (c) concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track (paras. 3.25 to 3.27).

Background

3.2 In general, LCSD sports grounds open every day from early morning to evening, unless they are closed for renovation, maintenance and during adverse weather (Note 19). LCSD sports grounds can be hired for athletic meets, training and other sports activities. Schools and organisations can hire the whole sports ground or the in-field turf pitch, whereas individuals can only hire the in-field turf pitch. When a sports ground is not hired for exclusive use, its running track is open to the public for jogging (see para. 1.11).

Booking and allocation

3.3 LCSD has issued guidelines on booking and allocation of sports grounds and in-field turf pitches (LCSD booking guidelines — Note 20), which set out the procedures for application, and the related payment and cancellation arrangements.

Note 19: *The opening and closing time of the 25 sports grounds vary. In general, the sports grounds open at 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. and close at 10:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (except the Kowloon Tsai Sports Ground which closes at 6:30 p.m. and the Wan Chai Sports Ground opens only when it is hired (see Note 6 to para. 1.11)). Besides, all LCSD sports grounds are closed on the first three days of the Chinese New Year.*

Note 20: *LCSD booking guidelines also cover booking of other sports and recreation facilities such as sports centres, tennis courts, squash courts, turf pitches and hard-surfaced pitches/courts.*

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3.4 ***Application by schools and organisations.*** Schools and organisations applying for using an LCSD sports ground or its in-field turf pitch shall submit an application to the venue directly. According to LCSD booking guidelines:

- (a) ***Use of application forms.*** Schools and organisations shall use designated application forms (Note 21) to book a sports ground or its in-field turf pitch for different purposes (e.g. athletic meets, training or other sports activities). Information required in the application form includes:
 - (i) intended dates and sessions for using the sports ground or the in-field turf pitch (one application form may involve bookings on multiple dates/sessions);
 - (ii) sports and other equipment required (e.g. starting pistol); and
 - (iii) information of two responsible persons (see para. 3.20(a));
- (b) ***Application deadlines for schools.*** Applications for using the sports ground and the in-field turf pitch during normal school hours (Note 22) shall be submitted by schools one school year in advance, as follows:
 - (i) by the first working day of May in the previous school year for using the sports ground for athletic meets; and

Note 21: *There are eight types of application forms for booking LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches by schools and organisations, e.g. application forms for use of:*

- (a) *sports grounds in urban area by schools for athletic meets;*
- (b) *in-field turf pitches by schools; and*
- (c) *sports grounds for athletic meets/sports activities/other revenue generating events by organisations.*

Note 22: *Normal school hours refer to 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Sundays, public holidays and school holidays are excluded.*

- (ii) by the first working day of June in the previous school year for using the sports ground for athletic training or for using the in-field turf pitch; and
- (c) ***Application periods for organisations.*** The application periods for organisations depend on the types of organisations and activities to be held. For example:
 - (i) for local international events, championships, leagues and training events organised by some organisations (Note 23), at least 4 but not more than 12 months in advance from the date of intended use;
 - (ii) for community involvement activities funded by the District Councils and organised by some eligible organisations (Note 24), not more than six months in advance from the date of intended use; and
 - (iii) for championships, leagues and training organised by some eligible organisations (see Note 24 in (c)(ii) above), not more than three months in advance from the date of intended use.

3.5 Allocation of venues and confirmation of bookings to schools and organisations. Sessions for using LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches are allocated to schools and organisations according to the priority preset by LCSD. If more than one application for the same session from applicants of the same priority are received, negotiation will be conducted among the applicants. If the negotiation is futile, allocation will be determined by ballot (see paras. 1.12 and 1.13(a)). LCSD will issue confirmation letters to successful applicants to confirm the bookings and request the applicants to pay the hire charges (see para. 1.14) on or before a payment due date (one confirmation letter may involve confirmation and request for payment for multiple dates/sessions).

Note 23: *Examples of organisations are the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, NSAs, community sports clubs, district sports associations, and organisations supported by LCSD and District Councils.*

Note 24: *Examples of eligible organisations are subvented non-governmental organisations, organisations exempted from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, affiliated clubs of NSAs, public or statutory bodies, and bona fide associations and corporations endorsed by LCSD.*

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3.6 *Audit examination.* Audit examined the records relating to 150 confirmation letters (150 cases) issued between 2016 and 2020 to schools and organisations (Note 25) for using three sports grounds, i.e. the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground, and found room for improvement as set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Need to review requirements on submitting applications

3.7 Audit examination of the application records relating to the 150 cases (see para. 3.6) revealed that:

- (a) in 42 (28%) cases, the applicants used the incorrect application forms (see para. 3.4(a));
- (b) in 24 (16%) cases, the applicants submitted the applications by letters instead of the designated application forms (see para. 3.4(a)); and
- (c) in 19 (13%) cases, the applicants did not provide any information on the responsible persons (see para. 3.4(a)(iii)). In 17 of these 19 cases, incorrect forms or letters in lieu of forms were used (see (a) and (b) above).

Audit also noted that despite not using the designated application forms or providing incomplete information in 68 (42 + 24 + 19 – 17) (45%) of the 150 cases, the applications had been approved. In Audit's view, LCSD should review the objectives and effectiveness of the requirement to submit designated application forms for using LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches, and streamline the application procedures as appropriate. LCSD also needs to take measures to ensure that the requirement to provide information on responsible persons in submitting applications is complied with.

Need to conduct random checks on balloting results

3.8 According to LCSD booking guidelines, in order to ensure that the sessions for using the sports grounds and the in-field turf pitches are allocated according to the

Note 25: *Of these 150 cases, 75 involved school bookings and 75 involved organisation bookings.*

preset priority and the allocation and balloting procedure, random checks shall be conducted on 0.5% and 1% of the successful and unsuccessful applications involved in the ballots conducted in the month respectively. The checking records shall be maintained properly and submitted to the respective District Leisure Services Office for verification.

3.9 Between 2016 and 2020, balloting had been conducted in 2 (i.e. the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground) of the 3 sports grounds examined by Audit (see para. 3.6). Audit noted that:

- (a) for the Sha Tin Sports Ground, there were no records of random checks on the successful and unsuccessful applications involved in the ballots; and
- (b) for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, only the records of random check on the successful and unsuccessful applications involved in the balloting in September 2018 were available for audit examination. The records on the random check for the month had been submitted to the District Leisure Services Office for verification. For the remaining months with balloting conducted, there were no records on the random checks.

Audit considers that LCSD needs to remind its staff to conduct random checks on balloting results, and maintain and submit the checking records to the respective District Leisure Services Office for verification as required under LCSD booking guidelines.

Need to set payment due dates in accordance with guidelines

3.10 LCSD requests applicants for using LCSD sports grounds or in-field turf pitches to pay the hire charges on or before a payment due date stated in the booking confirmation letter (see para. 3.5). According to LCSD booking guidelines, depending on the application periods preset by LCSD for various types of organisations and activities to be held (see para. 3.4(c)), different payment due dates are set (e.g. 4 months before the date of use or 10 calendar days from the date of confirmation letter). Of the 75 cases involving organisation bookings (see Note 25 to

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para. 3.6), 60 cases involved payment of hire charges (Note 26). Audit noted that the payment due dates in 32 (53%) of these 60 cases were set at later dates than those required by LCSD booking guidelines. Audit considers that LCSD needs to remind its staff to set payment due dates in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines.

Need to handle cancellation of bookings in accordance with guidelines

3.11 According to LCSD booking guidelines, for cancellation of confirmed bookings for using LCSD sports grounds or in-field turf pitches by schools and organisations:

- (a) a hirer shall notify LCSD at least 20 days in advance of the date of use and provide justifications for the cancellation;
- (b) paid hire charges will only be refunded (partially or fully) under certain circumstances (e.g. venue closure due to adverse weather or urgent maintenance);
- (c) if a hirer does not notify LCSD of the cancellation at least 20 days in advance of the date of use or does not show up at the venue on the date of use (i.e. no-show), LCSD will request the hirer to provide written justifications. If no written justification is provided or LCSD is not satisfied with the justifications, LCSD will:
 - (i) issue a default notice to the hirer concerned; and
 - (ii) if two default notices are issued to the hirer relating to cancellation of booking in the same venue within 12 months, the hirer will be

Note 26: *According to LCSD, hire charges were not payable for bookings by some organisations, including:*

- (a) *bookings made by district football teams under the District Sports Teams Training Scheme (the teams are provided with 36 sessions for training in their respective districts in each football season for free); and*
- (b) *bookings for using sports grounds in the New Territories for athletics training.*

suspended from priority booking for all land-based leisure facilities in the same district for six months; and

- (d) LCSD will release the facilities with cancelled bookings for public use and re-booking as appropriate (Note 27).

3.12 Of the 150 cases examined by Audit (see para. 3.6), 22 (15%) involved cancellation (18 cases) or no-show (4 cases). Of these 22 cases, Audit noted that:

- (a) in 4 (18%) cases, the hirers had notified LCSD of the cancellation of bookings more than 20 days in advance of the date of use, in compliance with LCSD booking guidelines;
- (b) in 3 (14%) cases, there were no records on the date of notification;
- (c) in 11 (50%) cases, the hirers had failed to notify LCSD of the cancellation at least 20 days in advance. Of these 11 cases:
 - (i) in 9 cases, the hirers had given written justifications. LCSD had not recorded its acceptance or otherwise of the justifications, and had not issued default notices; and
 - (ii) in 2 cases, the hirers had not given written justifications and LCSD had not issued default notices; and
- (d) in the remaining 4 (18%) cases, the hirers did not show up at the venues on the dates of use. Of these 4 cases:
 - (i) in 1 case, the hirer had given written justifications and LCSD had recorded its acceptance of the justifications;
 - (ii) in another case, the hirer had given written justifications. LCSD had not recorded its acceptance or otherwise of the justifications, and had not issued default notices; and

Note 27: *Since June 2013, the turf pitches of sports grounds would not be released for re-booking when the hirer did not show up.*

- (iii) in the remaining 2 cases, the hirers had not given written justifications and LCSD had not issued default notices.

In Audit's view, timely release of facilities with cancelled bookings for public use or re-booking enables effective use of sports facilities. Issuing default notices with suspension of further booking may deter hirers from cancelling the bookings without justifiable reasons. Audit considers that LCSD needs to take measures to ensure compliance by hirers with the 20 days' advance notification requirement on cancellation of bookings for using sports grounds and in-field turf pitches. LCSD also needs to remind its staff to request written justifications from hirers in case of booking cancellation and no-show as appropriate, maintain proper records on LCSD's acceptance or otherwise of the justifications, and issue default notices when necessary.

Room for improvement in administering the use of in-field turf pitches

3.13 ***Maximum available sessions for use of in-field turf pitches.*** According to LCSD, in order to maintain the quality of natural turf, it limits the usage of the in-field turf pitches in 22 sports grounds (see para. 1.6). In general, the maximum number of sessions (90 minutes each — see para. 1.11) for using an in-field turf pitch is 60 (maximum available sessions) per month. For sports grounds used as HKPL competition or standby competition venue (see para. 1.5), the monthly maximum available sessions for use are 28 and 40 respectively. Table 6 shows the monthly maximum available sessions for using the in-field turf pitches in the 22 sports grounds (as of August 2021).

Table 6

**Monthly maximum available sessions for use
of in-field turf pitches in 22 sports grounds
(August 2021)**

Type of venue	Sports ground	No. of maximum available sessions (Note)
HKPL competition venue	Aberdeen Sports Ground	28
	Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground	28
	Sham Shui Po Sports Ground	28
	Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground	28
	Tsing Yi Sports Ground	28
	Yuen Long Stadium	28
HKPL standby competition venue	Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground	40
	Tai Po Sports Ground	40
	Tuen Mun Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground	40
HKPL training venue	Kowloon Tsai Sports Ground	60
Not used as HKPL venues	Causeway Bay Sports Ground	60
	Fanling Recreation Ground	60
	Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	60
	Kwai Chung Sports Ground	60
	Ma On Shan Sports Ground	60
	North District Sports Ground	60
	Sai Kung Tang Shiu Kin Sports Ground	60
	Sha Tin Sports Ground	60
	Shing Mun Valley Sports Ground	60
	Siu Lun Sports Ground	60
	Tin Shui Wai Sports Ground	60
	Wo Yi Hop Road Sports Ground	60

Source: LCSD records

Note: The monthly maximum available sessions for using the in-field turf pitch in a sports ground may change if the use of the in-field turf pitch is changed (i.e. it is used/no longer used as HKPL competition/standby competition venue — see para. 1.5).

Operational matters

3.14 *Setting a cap on the use of in-field turf pitches by schools and organisations.* According to LCSD booking guidelines:

- (a) for the in-field turf pitches with 60 monthly maximum available sessions, only 30 sessions shall be allocated to schools and organisations (i.e. at least 30 sessions shall be allocated for individual bookings — see para. 1.13(b)). The District Leisure Services Offices may adjust the monthly maximum available sessions allocated to schools and organisations based on the conditions of the in-field turf pitches and local demand; and
- (b) venue staff shall prepare a monthly register of bookings for using the in-field turf pitches by schools and organisations for necessary control and follow-up actions. Officers from the respective District Leisure Services Office shall conduct random checks on the monthly registers at least once per quarter per venue.

3.15 *Need to ensure that monthly registers are prepared and checked.* Audit examined the monthly registers (see para. 3.14(b)) of three sports grounds (see para. 3.6) in the period between January 2016 and December 2020 (60 months) and found that:

- (a) for the Aberdeen Sports Ground, there were no records on the monthly registers for the 60-month period (Note 28);
- (b) for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, there were no records on the monthly registers in 2 of the 60 months examined. For the remaining 58 months, available sessions allocated to schools and organisations exceeded 30 in 2 months (32 and 34 sessions) and the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations were not documented;

Note 28: *For the Aberdeen Sports Ground, 28 sessions were available monthly between January 2016 and August 2019 and between September 2020 and December 2020 (48 months), and 60 sessions were available monthly between September 2019 and August 2020 (12 months).*

- (c) for the Sha Tin Sports Ground, available sessions allocated to schools and organisations exceeded 30 in 6 months (ranging from 33 to 42 sessions) and the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations were not documented; and
- (d) random checks had been conducted by the respective District Leisure Services Office on the monthly registers in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground.

In Audit's view, LCSD needs to remind its staff to prepare monthly registers on the use of in-field turf pitches in LCSD sports grounds by schools and organisations, and conduct the random checks as required under LCSD booking guidelines. LCSD also needs to take measures to ensure that the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations for using in-field turf pitches in LCSD sports grounds are documented.

Audit recommendations

3.16 Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

- (a) review the objectives and effectiveness of the requirement to submit designated application forms for using LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches, and streamline the application procedures as appropriate;
- (b) take measures to ensure that the requirement to provide information on responsible persons in submitting applications is complied with;
- (c) remind LCSD staff to conduct random checks on balloting results, and maintain and submit the checking records to the respective District Leisure Services Office for verification as required under LCSD booking guidelines;
- (d) remind LCSD staff to set payment due dates in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines;

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- (e) **take measures to ensure compliance by hirers with the 20 days' advance notification requirement on cancellation of bookings for using sports grounds and in-field turf pitches;**
- (f) **remind LCSD staff to request written justifications from hirers in case of booking cancellation and no-show as appropriate, maintain proper records on LCSD's acceptance or otherwise of the justifications, and issue default notices when necessary;**
- (g) **remind LCSD staff to prepare monthly registers on the use of in-field turf pitches in LCSD sports grounds by schools and organisations, and conduct the random checks as required under LCSD booking guidelines; and**
- (h) **take measures to ensure that the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations for using in-field turf pitches in LCSD sports grounds are documented.**

Response from the Government

3.17 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) using designated application forms for booking LCSD sports grounds and in-field turf pitches could facilitate venue management in processing applications. LCSD will remind staff at sports grounds to follow LCSD booking guidelines when handling the relating applications;
- (b) LCSD staff have been reminded to check and ensure that all required fields in the application form, including information on responsible persons, are completed by the applicants;
- (c) LCSD officers at district management level have been reminded to conduct random checks on balloting results, and maintain and submit the checking records to the respective District Leisure Services Offices for verification as required under LCSD booking guidelines;

- (d) LCSD staff processing applications at sports grounds have been reminded to set payment due dates in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines; and
- (e) Venue Managers (see para. 4.2(c)) have been reminded to:
 - (i) ensure hirers' compliance with the 20 days' advance notification requirement on booking cancellation in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines;
 - (ii) follow LCSD booking guidelines in handling booking cancellations and no-shows;
 - (iii) prepare monthly registers on the use of in-field turf pitches by schools and organisations in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines; and
 - (iv) keep proper records on the justifications for adjusting the maximum number of sessions allocated to schools and organisations for using in-field turf pitches in accordance with LCSD booking guidelines.

Reporting of utilisation

3.18 ***Reporting procedures.*** LCSD uses a computer system (i.e. the Call Return System — CARS) to facilitate the preparation of statistical reports on the usage of LCSD sports and recreation facilities. Staff of each sports ground submit the actual usage of the sports ground and the in-field turf pitch every month through CARS. The Land-based Venues Section of LCSD (see para. 1.15) coordinates and verifies the information submitted and prepares the statistical reports on utilisation.

3.19 ***Audit examination.*** Audit examined the records used in preparing the actual usage of sports grounds and in-field turf pitches in three sports grounds (see para. 3.6) and found room for improvement as set out in paragraphs 3.20 to 3.22.

Need to maintain proper check-in records

3.20 *Check-in procedures for taking up booked sessions.* According to LCSD, check-in registers shall be maintained in each sports ground to record the taking up of booked sessions for using the sports ground and the in-field turf pitch. To take up the booked facilities:

- (a) one of the two responsible persons as nominated in the application form for school/organisation bookings (see para. 3.4(a)(iii)) or the hirer for individual bookings (see para. 1.13(b)) shall be present at the venue;
- (b) venue staff shall check the validity of the booking (e.g. booking confirmation letter) and the identity of the responsible person/hirer; and
- (c) the responsible person/hirer shall sign on the check-in register.

3.21 Audit examined the check-in registers of three sports grounds (see para. 3.19) in the period between January 2016 and December 2020 (60 months) and found that:

- (a) in all three sports grounds, check-in registers were only available for audit examination for some periods (see Table 7);

Table 7

**Availability of check-in registers for audit examination
(60-month period from January 2016 to December 2020)**

Sports ground	Availability for audit examination	
	Check-in register for sports ground	Check-in register for in-field turf pitch
Aberdeen Sports Ground	January to March 2016 (3 months) (Note)	
Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	April 2017 to December 2020 (45 months)	September 2017 to December 2020 (40 months)
Sha Tin Sports Ground	April to December 2019 and June, July, September to December 2020 (15 months) (Note)	

Source: LCSD records

Note: Check-in records for using the sports ground and the in-field turf pitch were maintained in the same register.

- (b) check-in registers of the three sports grounds were of different formats. For example, venue staff responsible for checking (see para. 3.20(b)) was required to sign on the register in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground after checking, but there was no such requirement in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground; and
- (c) of the 150 cases selected by Audit for examination on booking and allocation (see para. 3.6), booked sessions in 59 cases fell under the periods with check-in registers available. In 7 (12%) of these 59 cases, the check-in registers were not signed by the responsible persons/hirers (see para. 3.20(c)). There was no record showing whether the sessions had been taken up and whether follow-up actions had been taken by LCSD (e.g. issue of default notices).

In Audit's view, proper check-in records help ensure that procedures for taking up booked sessions (see para. 3.20) are properly followed by providing evidence that the booked sessions have been taken up. LCSD needs to review the current practices in maintaining check-in records in all LCSD sports grounds and take measures to ensure that check-in records are properly maintained in future.

Room for improvement in maintaining records of actual utilisation

3.22 Staff of each sports ground submit the actual usage of the sports ground and the in-field turf pitch every month through CARS (see para. 3.18). Audit visited three sports grounds (see para. 3.19) and noted that:

- (a) for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground, charts were maintained to record the operation and bookings monthly (e.g. information on booking allocation, cancellation, reallocation and closure of facilities). These charts were maintained in paper format and kept on files. Submission on the actual utilisation to CARS was based on the information maintained on the charts;
- (b) for the Aberdeen Sports Ground, some of the information on operation and bookings was maintained on a chart posted on a notice board and some in paper format. Responsible staff took photograph of the chart at the end of each month. Submission on the actual utilisation to CARS was based on both photographic and paper records. However, photographic records were not always kept on file; and
- (c) there were inconsistencies between the records in CARS and information in the charts and/or photographs kept in the sports grounds. For example, in one case, the running track was recorded as open for 1.5 hours according to the chart/photograph, but no such record was found in CARS.

In Audit's view, the monthly charts maintained by individual sports grounds are essential records on the actual utilisation of the sports grounds and the in-field turf pitches. Without proper records on the actual utilisation, accuracy of the information submitted to CARS could not be verified. LCSD needs to remind its staff to maintain proper records on actual utilisation on monthly charts and check the information submitted to CARS against the monthly charts to ensure accuracy.

Audit recommendations

3.23 **Audit has recommended that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) review the current practices in maintaining check-in records in all LCSD sports grounds and take measures to ensure that check-in records are properly maintained in future; and
- (b) remind LCSD staff to maintain proper records on actual utilisation on monthly charts and check the information submitted to CARS against the monthly charts to ensure accuracy.

Response from the Government

3.24 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that Venue Managers (see para. 4.2(c)) have been reminded to:

- (a) maintain a check-in record for hirers to sign in at the register counter and keep proper records in accordance with LCSD check-in procedures; and
- (b) prepare monthly reports on actual usage of sports and recreation facilities and ensure consistency in the calculation and reporting of statistical returns in accordance with LCSD guidelines on reporting monthly usage.

Concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track

Different practices of concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track

3.25 LCSD completed a review on the concurrent use of sports grounds for football and jogging activities in 2002. With effect from 1 October 2002, to provide adequate buffer for safety of users, only the outer three lanes of the running track can be used when ball games are conducted in the in-field turf pitch. Audit examined the arrangement of concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track in three sports grounds (see para. 3.6) and found that:

- (a) for the Sha Tin Sports Ground, when ball games were conducted in the in-field turf pitch, the outer three lanes of the 8-lane running track could be used for jogging;

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- (b) for the Aberdeen Sports Ground, when ball games were conducted in the in-field turf pitch, the outer four lanes (instead of three) of the 6-lane running track could be used for jogging. The arrangement has been adopted since February 2010 in response to local demand; and
- (c) for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, when ball games were conducted in the in-field turf pitch, the outer four lanes (instead of three) of the 8-lane running track could be used for jogging. The arrangement has been adopted since February 2011 in response to local demand.

In Audit's view, LCSD needs to conduct a review on the current arrangements of concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track in LCSD sports grounds having regard to the need to ensure safety of users and public demand for running tracks.

Audit recommendation

3.26 Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should conduct a review on the current arrangements of concurrent use of in-field turf pitch and running track in LCSD sports grounds having regard to the need to ensure safety of users and public demand for running tracks.

Response from the Government

3.27 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that LCSD has relaxed the arrangement to allow concurrent use of sports grounds for football and jogging activities since 1 October 2002. The latter should be limited to the outer three lanes of the running track to provide adequate buffer for safety of joggers. LCSD will review the current arrangements having regard to safety of users and public demand for running tracks.

PART 4: VENUE MANAGEMENT

4.1 This PART examines the venue management of LCSD sports grounds, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) management of facilities (paras. 4.3 to 4.17);
- (b) maintenance of facilities (paras. 4.18 to 4.23); and
- (c) inspections of sports grounds (paras. 4.24 to 4.27).

Venue management

4.2 The venue management of LCSD sports grounds is overseen by various sections/offices as follows:

- (a) ***Leisure Management Sections.*** The Leisure Management Section in each of the six geographical areas (Note 29) oversees the District Leisure Services Offices and the tree team in the respective areas. Each Leisure Management Section is headed by a Chief Leisure Manager (CLM);
- (b) ***District Leisure Services Offices.*** Each District Leisure Services Office oversees one or more sports grounds and other leisure venues in the district. A District Leisure Services Office is headed by a District Leisure Manager (DLM), who is supported by Deputy DLMs and Assistant DLMs; and
- (c) ***Sports grounds.*** Each sports ground is overseen by a Venue Manager (Note 30). The Venue Manager is supported by Amenities Assistants, Artisans and Workmen, and staff of contractors.

Note 29: *The six geographical areas are Kowloon, Hong Kong West, Hong Kong East, New Territories East, New Territories North and New Territories West (see Appendix A).*

Note 30: *CLM, DLM, Deputy DLM, Assistant DLM and Venue Manager are staff of the Leisure Services Manager grade.*

Management of facilities

4.3 Various facilities are provided in LCSD sports grounds, including:

- (a) immovable facilities such as running tracks, in-field turf pitches and spectator stands;
- (b) sports equipment for hire by users such as javelins, relay batons and hurdles;
- (c) equipment for venue management such as grass-cutting machines and first-aid equipment; and
- (d) other facilities for public use such as kiosks and car parks.

Between June and August 2021, Audit examined the management of various facilities of three sports grounds, i.e. the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground, and found room for improvement as set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Room for improvement in inventory management

4.4 *LCSD guidelines on inventory management.* LCSD has issued departmental guidelines setting out the requirements on inventory management. According to the guidelines:

- (a) an annual stocktake on all inventory items shall be conducted by venue staff;
- (b) an additional stocktake on all inventory items shall be conducted every four years by non-venue staff; and
- (c) an inventory holder (i.e. the venue staff responsible for store management) shall:

- (i) establish good practice for timely disposal of surplus stores items;
- (ii) examine the storage and security arrangement and make necessary improvement from time to time; and
- (iii) label all inventory items with item code, description and/or name of the inventory holding unit for easy identification, where appropriate.

4.5 During visits to the three sports grounds (see para. 4.3), Audit noted the following irregularities in inventory management:

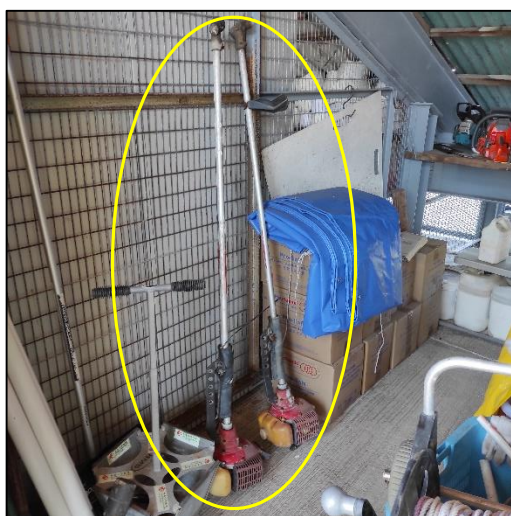
- (a) ***Stocktake discrepancies.*** LCSD staff conducted stocktakes between 2017 and 2021 (up to June) in the three sports grounds as required under LCSD guidelines on inventory management (see para. 4.4(a) and (b)) and no irregularities were identified. However, Audit conducted a sample stocktake of 60 inventory items in the three sports grounds and found discrepancies in 35 (58%) of them; and
- (b) ***Irregularities in inventory control measures.*** Audit examined the inventory control measures taken in the three sports grounds and noted the following:
 - (i) ***No label with identification code on inventory items.*** Of the 60 inventory items examined by Audit in the three sports grounds (see (a) above), only 2 items were labelled with identification codes;
 - (ii) ***Lack of location information.*** The inventory lists maintained by the three sports grounds only included the descriptions and quantities of the inventory items. No information on the storing locations of the items was kept;
 - (iii) ***Obsolete inventory items not timely disposed of.*** Some inventory items examined by Audit in the three sports grounds appeared to be dilapidated and/or unserviceable (see examples in Photographs 6(a) and (b)). According to venue staff, these items had been found unserviceable and had already been replaced by new items; and

- (iv) ***Unlocked storeroom.*** The main storeroom in the Aberdeen Sports Ground was found unlocked on the date of Audit inspection on 8 July 2021.

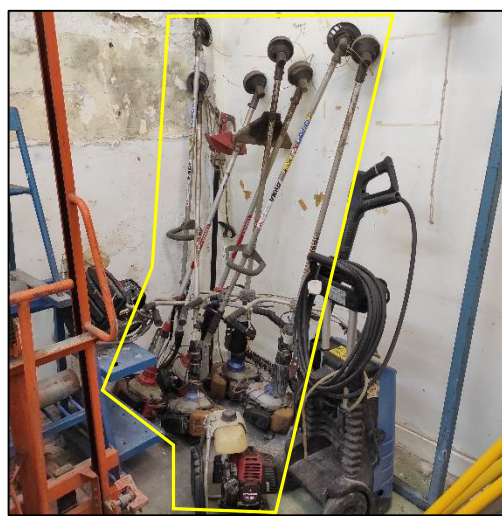
Photographs 6(a) and (b)

Examples of inventory items appearing to be dilapidated and/or unserviceable

**(a) Brush cutters in the
Aberdeen Sports Ground**



**(b) Brush cutters in the
Kowloon Bay Sports Ground**



Source: Photographs taken by Audit staff in July and August 2021

4.6 Audit examination revealed that there was room for improvement in inventory management in the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground. Audit considers that LCSD needs to take improvement measures in inventory management in light of Audit's observations in the three sports grounds. LCSD also needs to review whether there are similar irregularities in other LCSD sports grounds and take improvement measures as appropriate.

Room for improvement in provision of equipment for emergency uses

4.7 Equipment for emergency uses, such as first-aid boxes and automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), is provided in LCSD sports grounds. Audit examined the provision of such equipment in three sports grounds (see para. 4.3) and found room for improvement as set out in paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9.

4.8 ***Need to take measures to rectify the irregularities in provision of first-aid equipment.*** According to LCSD guidelines on provision of first-aid equipment, basic first-aid equipment shall be provided in first-aid rooms and/or first-aid boxes at sports grounds to handle minor injuries and facilitate immediate on-the-spot treatment. A list of items with respective expiry dates shall be displayed beside each first-aid box for ease of checking. Audit examined the first-aid equipment and relevant inspection records in the three sports grounds and the results are summarised below (see details in Appendix B):

- (a) during the 12-month period from July 2020 to June 2021:
 - (i) venue staff of the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground had conducted monthly inspections of the first-aid equipment;
 - (ii) venue staff of the Sha Tin Sports Ground had conducted weekly inspections of the first-aid equipment in 8 of the 12 months; and
 - (iii) inspection records were not available in the Aberdeen Sports Ground;
- (b) some standard items of equipment (e.g. first-aid box) were not provided in the first-aid rooms and some standard items (e.g. disinfectant) were not provided in the first-aid boxes;
- (c) lists of items with respective expiry dates were not displayed beside all first-aid boxes; and
- (d) a first-aid item in one of the first-aid boxes had expired.

Proper maintenance of first-aid equipment in sports grounds is essential for providing emergency medical treatment to users. Audit considers that LCSD needs to take measures to rectify as soon as possible the irregularities identified by Audit in the provision of first-aid equipment in the three sports grounds. LCSD also needs to take measures to ensure that the guidelines on the provision of first-aid equipment are complied with in all of its sports grounds.

4.9 *Need to ensure that AEDs are provided in accordance with LCSD guidelines.* Since 2013, AEDs have been provided in LCSD sports grounds to assist persons in need of heart resuscitation. According to LCSD guidelines on the provision of AEDs:

- (a) venue staff shall conduct daily inspections on AEDs to ensure that they are serviceable by checking the status indicator, the expiry date of the electrodes and the alarm;
- (b) AEDs shall be installed at convenient locations and a notice showing the locations of the AEDs shall be conspicuously displayed;
- (c) a list of qualified AED operators, with valid certificates issued by relevant authorities (Note 31), shall be maintained in the venue; and
- (d) a notice indicating the need for persons with training to operate the AED shall be displayed near each AED.

Audit examined the provision of AEDs in the three sports grounds (see para. 4.3) between June and August 2021 and found a number of irregularities, including daily inspections not conducted, and notices showing AED locations not conspicuously displayed (see Table 8). As AEDs are crucial to assisting persons in need of heart resuscitation, Audit considers that LCSD needs to take measures to rectify as soon as possible the irregularities identified by Audit in the provision of AEDs in the three sports grounds. LCSD also needs to take measures to ensure that the guidelines on the provision of AEDs are complied with in all of its sports grounds.

Note 31: *A certificate for operating AED will be issued to a person who has completed the relevant training and passed the examination by an authority, such as the Hospital Authority, the Auxiliary Medical Service, or the Hong Kong St. John Ambulance. In general, the validity period of a certificate is three years.*

Table 8

**Results of audit examination of
AEDs in three sports grounds
(June to August 2021)**

	Aberdeen Sports Ground	Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	Sha Tin Sports Ground
Records of daily inspections by venue staff (between July 2020 and June 2021)	✓	✗ (Note 1)	✗
Condition of AEDs on date of Audit inspection			
Date of Audit inspection	29 June 2021	4 August 2021	21 July 2021
No. of AEDs	1	1	1
Green light on AED status indicator	✓	✓	✓
AED with expiry date of electrodes properly displayed	✗ (Note 2)	✓	✓
AED alarm in function	✓	✓	✗ (Note 3)
Notice showing AED location conspicuously displayed	✗ (Note 4)	✓	✗
AED with notice displayed indicating need for persons with training to operate	✗	✓	✗
List of qualified AED operators maintained in venue	✓	✓	✓

Source: Audit on-site inspections on 29 June, 21 July and 4 August 2021

Note 1: Records of daily inspections between July 2020 and June 2021, except for 57 days, were not available for audit examination.

Note 2: The expiry date could only be seen after opening the box storing the AED.

Note 3: The alarm cable of the AED was disconnected. Venue staff reconnected the cable immediately on the date of Audit inspection.

Note 4: The notice showing AED location was partially blocked by another notice.

Scope for better use of spaces

4.10 Audit examined the use of spaces in three sports grounds (see para. 4.3) and found room for improvement in the use of storerooms and accessible toilets in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground as follows:

- (a) of the 15 storerooms in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, Audit noted that 1 was used for storing sundry items (see Photograph 7(a)) and another was used for storing boxes of old records, some of which were closed about 22 years ago (see Photograph 7(b)); and
- (b) three accessible toilets were provided in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, two of which were located on the ground floor while one was located on the first floor. Audit noted that the accessible toilet on the first floor was locked and not open for public use (see Photograph 8). Upon enquiry, venue staff informed Audit in August 2021 that the accessible toilet on the first floor had not been used for years.

In Audit's view, LCSD should review whether the two storerooms and the accessible toilet in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground mentioned above can be put into more gainful uses to ensure optimal use of accommodation resources.

Photographs 7(a) and (b)

**Storerooms with sundry items and old records
in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground**

(a) A storeroom with sundry items



(b) Another storeroom with old records



Source: Photographs taken by Audit staff in August 2021

Photograph 8

**Locked and unused accessible toilet
in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground**



*Source: Photograph taken by Audit staff
in August 2021*

Need to ensure compliance with operating conditions by kiosk operators

4.11 ***Kiosks in LCSD sports grounds.*** LCSD engages contractors to operate kiosks to provide light refreshment or fast food to users in most sports grounds (Note 32). According to LCSD, staff stationed in sports grounds shall inspect the kiosks daily to ascertain whether the kiosk operators comply with the operating conditions set out in the agreements between LCSD and the operators, such as:

- (a) the opening hours;
- (b) the sale of commodities with appropriate and valid licences or certificates; and
- (c) the validity of insurance policy.

A bi-weekly inspection report should be submitted to the supervisory officer.

4.12 ***Room for improvement.*** There is a light refreshment kiosk in each of the three sports grounds visited by Audit (see para. 4.3). Between 19 February 2021 (i.e. date of reopening of sports grounds — Note 33) and 31 July 2021, venue staff of the three sports grounds had submitted the bi-weekly inspection reports as required. Audit examination of the inspection reports and the operation of the kiosks revealed that:

- (a) LCSD did not record any irregularities on the operation of the kiosks in the three sports grounds, including the opening hours of the kiosks; and
- (b) for the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, according to the operating conditions, the kiosks should open from

Note 32: *As of September 2021, of the 25 sports grounds, 18 were provided with at least one kiosk.*

Note 33: *Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, LCSD sports grounds had been temporarily closed from time to time to comply with social distancing measures. On 19 February 2021, all LCSD sports grounds were reopened.*

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day (including weekdays and public holidays). However, Audit noted that:

- (i) both kiosks were not open during Audit visits on weekdays from 29 June to 12 July 2021 (9 weekdays) and from 3 to 9 August 2021 (5 weekdays) to the two sports grounds respectively;
- (ii) upon enquiry, venue staff informed Audit in August and September 2021 that the kiosks had not been operating since the reopening of sports grounds on 19 February 2021 (see Note 33); and
- (iii) according to LCSD, if a kiosk was not open in accordance with the agreement, it might issue an advisory or warning notice to the operator. If the condition persisted, it might also suspend or terminate the agreement. However, there was no record on the follow-up actions taken by LCSD on the non-compliance with the opening hours in the two sports grounds.

In Audit's view, LCSD should review the objectives and effectiveness of the inspection on kiosk operation, and take measures to ensure that the operating conditions, including the requirement on opening hours, are complied with.

Need to step up monitoring of cleansing contractors' performance

4.13 ***Cleansing of sports grounds.*** LCSD engages contractors to provide cleansing service to sports grounds (Note 34). The cleansing service agreements between LCSD and the contractors set out the conditions of services to be provided in the venues, including the frequency of cleansing to various locations, number of cleansing staff attending the venues, and requirements on cleansing records.

Note 34: *LCSD engages contractors to provide cleansing service to leisure venues based on geographical locations. For example, one contractor provides cleansing service to all leisure venues in East Kowloon while another contractor provides the service in North District, Sai Kung and Sha Tin.*

Venue management

4.14 ***Cleansing requirements on changing rooms and toilets.*** According to the cleansing service agreements of the three sports grounds examined by Audit (see para. 4.3):

- (a) the contractors shall cleanse the changing rooms and toilets (including the toilet cubicles, walls, doors and floor) six times a day; and
- (b) when the contractors have completed the cleansing of the changing rooms and toilets each time, the responsible staff needs to record the date and time of cleansing and sign the respective entry in a performance record form provided by LCSD.

4.15 Audit examined the cleansing records of the changing rooms and toilets of the three sports grounds for a 90-day period (Note 35) and noted that:

- (a) for the Aberdeen Sports Ground, LCSD did not provide the performance record form (see para. 4.14(b)) to the contractor to record cleansing of changing rooms and toilets, and the contractor did not record the cleansing each time. Instead, the contractor provided LCSD with photographs of cleansed facilities from time to time, and venue staff had inspected the changing rooms and toilets 1 to 4 times a day and completed the performance record form accordingly;
- (b) for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, LCSD did not provide the performance record form to the contractor to record cleansing of changing rooms and toilets, and the contractor did not record the cleansing each time. LCSD inspected the changing rooms and toilets once a day; and
- (c) for the Sha Tin Sports Ground, LCSD provided a performance record form to the contractor to record cleansing of changing rooms and toilets. According to the performance record forms, the contractor performed the

Note 35: *The 90-day periods examined by Audit in the three sports grounds are as follows:*

- (a) *for the Aberdeen Sports Ground, from 14 April to 12 July 2021;*
- (b) *for the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, from 5 May to 2 August 2021; and*
- (c) *for the Sha Tin Sports Ground, from 1 May to 29 July 2021.*

cleansing duty twice a day. LCSD inspected the changing rooms and toilets every time after cleansing.

The contractor of the Sha Tin Sports Ground had not complied with the required cleansing frequency of six times a day. For the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, there was no record showing that the cleansing contractors had complied with the required cleansing frequency. Audit considers that LCSD needs to step up monitoring of contractors' performance to ensure that changing rooms and toilets of LCSD sports grounds are cleansed at the required frequency and cleansing records are properly maintained.

Audit recommendations

4.16 Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

- (a) take improvement measures in inventory management in light of Audit's observations in the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground;**
- (b) review whether there are similar irregularities in inventory management in other LCSD sports grounds (i.e. other than the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground) and take improvement measures as appropriate;**
- (c) take measures to:**
 - (i) rectify as soon as possible the irregularities identified by Audit in the provision of first-aid equipment and AEDs in the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground; and**
 - (ii) ensure that the guidelines on the provision of first-aid equipment and AEDs are complied with in all LCSD sports grounds;**

- (d) **review whether the two storerooms and the accessible toilet in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground can be put into more gainful uses to ensure optimal use of accommodation resources;**
- (e) **review the objectives and effectiveness of the inspection on kiosk operation, and take measures to ensure that the operating conditions, including the requirement on opening hours, are complied with; and**
- (f) **step up monitoring of contractors' performance to ensure that changing rooms and toilets of LCSD sports grounds are cleansed at the required frequency and cleansing records are properly maintained.**

Response from the Government

4.17 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) Venue Managers have been required to ensure safe custody and exercise proper care of the inventory items under their control in accordance with LCSD guidelines on inventory management;
- (b) all inventory holders have been reminded to review whether there are irregularities in inventory management (e.g. irregularities in inventory records, no label with identification code on inventory items or obsolete items not timely disposed of) in the respective sports grounds;
- (c) the irregularities identified by Audit in the provision of first-aid equipment and AEDs in the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground have been rectified;
- (d) Venue Managers have been reminded to ensure that LCSD guidelines on provision of first-aid equipment and AEDs are complied with;
- (e) LCSD will tidy up the storerooms in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and request its works agents to conduct feasibility study on converting the accessible toilet on the first floor to other ancillary facilities;

- (f) venue staff are reminded to:
 - (i) inspect the kiosks in sports grounds daily in accordance with the prevailing inspection guidelines;
 - (ii) check the compliance of kiosk operators according to the inspection items listed on the bi-weekly inspection report, and record the irregularities observed and the immediate actions taken properly on the occurrence book (see para. 4.24(b)(iii)); and
 - (iii) report the inspection details systematically by completing the bi-weekly inspection report for onward submission to supervisory staff for checking and taking necessary follow-up actions with kiosk operators for effective monitoring of their performance; and
- (g) LCSD will incorporate the cleansing record form for use by contractor staff in the relevant inspection guidelines, and remind responsible staff to request the contractors to complete and properly keep the record form for regular checking in order to:
 - (i) enhance the monitoring of contractors' performance; and
 - (ii) ensure the contractors' compliance with the conditions of the cleansing service agreements, including amongst other things, the cleansing frequency.

Maintenance of facilities

4.18 *Maintenance of sports ground facilities.* The maintenance of building components (e.g. the structural components, and water supplies and sewage systems), and electrical and mechanical equipment (e.g. water heaters, air-conditioners and fire services installations) in LCSD sports grounds is performed by ArchSD, and the

Venue management

Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund (EMSTF — Note 36) of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department respectively.

4.19 ***Reporting and monitoring of maintenance works.*** LCSD has issued guidelines on maintenance of leisure facilities, including sports grounds. The guidelines set out guidance on reporting of defects and monitoring of maintenance works. According to the guidelines:

- (a) venue staff shall report any defects identified to the relevant maintenance parties (i.e. ArchSD or EMSTF) as soon as possible;
- (b) venue staff shall keep proper records of defects for taking follow-up actions, including:
 - (i) photographs of any visible defects;
 - (ii) identification date of defects, description of defects and responsible venue staff; and
 - (iii) details of the maintenance request such as date of the request, maintenance parties informed, reference number of the request, and completion date of the maintenance works;
- (c) if the maintenance works, without justification, could not be completed within the agreed timeframe (Note 37), venue staff shall report the case to the District Leisure Services Office (see para. 4.2(b)) to take further follow-up actions;

Note 36: *LCSD entered into service level agreements with EMSTF for the provision of operation and maintenance services to systems and equipment for LCSD venues, including sports grounds.*

Note 37: *For minor maintenance works of building components, LCSD has agreed to ArchSD's target completion time for various kinds of works (e.g. temporary repair within 1 day and permanent repair within 3 days for urgent works). For maintenance works on electrical and mechanical equipment, the target completion time set out in service level agreements shall be followed (e.g. 3 to 24 hours for urgent works on engineering and electronic services). For complicated maintenance works, LCSD may agree with the maintenance party on a reasonable timeframe for works completion.*

- (d) the District Leisure Services Office shall prepare and submit to the Leisure Management Section (see para. 4.2(a)) a monthly report on the outstanding maintenance requests which could not be completed within one month; and
- (e) the Leisure Management Section shall prepare a quarterly report on the outstanding maintenance requests which could not be completed within one month for discussion in meetings to be held between LCSD and the relevant maintenance parties quarterly.

Room for improvement in reporting and monitoring of maintenance works

4.20 Between June and August 2021, Audit visited three sports grounds (see para. 4.3) and examined the records of maintenance works. Audit noted that:

- (a) all the three sports grounds recorded maintenance works on maintenance works registers. While a register of standard format with different fields (e.g. date of maintenance request, location, and completion date) was adopted in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, no similar register of standard format was adopted in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground;
- (b) of the 779 maintenance works requests made between January and December 2020 in the three sports grounds, information (e.g. identification date of defects, completion date of works and request reference number — see para. 4.19(b)) recorded in 298 (38%) requests was inadequate for taking follow-up actions (see Table 9). In addition, photographs of visible defects were not always taken;

Table 9

**Number of maintenance works requests with
inadequate information recorded
(January to December 2020)**

Sports ground	No. of maintenance works requests	No. of maintenance works requests with inadequate information recorded
Aberdeen Sports Ground	384	171 (45%)
Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	156	72 (46%)
Sha Tin Sports Ground	239	55 (23%)
Total	779	298 (38%)

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

- (c) for the period between January 2016 and August 2021, there was no record on outstanding maintenance works, including no case reports submitted to the District Leisure Services Office, no monthly reports submitted to the Leisure Management Section, and no quarterly reports for discussion in meetings between LCSD and the relevant maintenance parties (see para. 4.19(c) to (e)). Upon enquiry, venue staff informed Audit that the reports had not been prepared due to no outstanding works; and
- (d) two sets of solar water heating systems (for supplementary water pre-heating purpose) were reported out of order in April 2017 in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground. The Venue Manager liaised with staff of EMSTF in June and August 2019 on the maintenance works, and was informed in October 2020 that the systems were out of economic repair. In August 2021, upon LCSD enquiry, staff of EMSTF informed the Venue Manager that:
 - (i) the estimated maintenance cost of the systems was \$0.6 million and the maintenance works would take 10 months to complete; and

- (ii) the systems were beyond economic repair taking into consideration the actual usage of the systems and the operation conditions of the venue.

In November 2021, LCSD informed Audit that it had confirmed with EMSTF that the replacement of the solar water heating systems by a new photovoltaic system was feasible. LCSD would take follow-up actions accordingly.

4.21 Without proper records (see para. 4.19(b)), the progress and status of maintenance works could not be readily assessed and follow-up actions could not be taken promptly (see para. 4.20(c)). Risks of non-attendance to malfunctioning facilities (e.g. solar water heating systems in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground — see para. 4.20(d)) may also arise. Audit considers that LCSD needs to:

- (a) enhance record keeping on maintenance works in the three sports grounds with a view to improving progress monitoring;
- (b) keep in view the replacement of the solar water heating systems in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground; and
- (c) review the maintenance of facilities in other LCSD sports grounds to ascertain whether there are irregularities similar to those mentioned in paragraph 4.20, and take improvement measures as appropriate.

Audit recommendations

4.22 **Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) **enhance record keeping on maintenance works in the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground with a view to improving progress monitoring;**
- (b) **keep in view the replacement of the solar water heating systems in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground; and**

- (c) review the maintenance of facilities in other LCSD sports grounds (i.e. other than the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground) to ascertain whether there are irregularities similar to those mentioned in paragraph 4.20, and take improvement measures as appropriate.

Response from the Government

4.23 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) Venue Managers of the Aberdeen Sports Ground, the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground have been reminded to enhance record keeping in accordance with LCSD guidelines on maintenance of leisure facilities; and
- (b) officers at district management level have been requested to review the maintenance of facilities in sports grounds under their purview with a view to keeping proper records of defects, monitoring the progress of maintenance works taken by the works agents, and reporting to the District Leisure Services Offices on any prolonged outstanding works in accordance with LCSD guidelines on maintenance of leisure facilities.

Inspections of sports grounds

4.24 *LCSD inspection guidelines.* LCSD has issued guidelines setting out the objectives and requirements on inspections of sports grounds (Note 38). According to the guidelines:

- (a) objectives of conducting inspections are to:
 - (i) check the performance of LCSD staff and contractors;

Note 38: *LCSD inspection guidelines also set out requirements on inspections to other land-based leisure venues.*

- (ii) ensure that the relevant guidelines, procedures and code of practice are properly followed and implemented;
 - (iii) ensure that the facilities are safe, clean and serviceable for use by the public; and
 - (iv) collect feedback from LCSD staff for management review; and
- (b) inspections shall be conducted by various LCSD sections/offices as follows:
- (i) CLMs of the Leisure Management Sections (see para. 4.2(a)) shall conduct surprise inspections to sports grounds as necessary;
 - (ii) DLMs/Deputy DLMs and Assistant DLMs of the District Leisure Services Offices (see para. 4.2(b)) shall conduct inspections to the sports grounds once every 6 months and 3 months respectively. DLMs may adjust the frequency of inspections to venues according to the operation needs and actual manpower situation; and
 - (iii) Amenities Assistants stationed at sports grounds (see para. 4.2(c)) shall conduct inspections daily and record their observations and irregularities identified on a record book (i.e. occurrence book) and take immediate follow-up actions as well as report to their supervisors on any significant issues.

Room for improvement in conducting inspections

4.25 Between June and August 2021, Audit visited three sports grounds (see para. 4.3) and examined the records on the inspections conducted between 2017 and 2021 (up to June). Audit found that:

- (a) for supervisory inspections conducted (see para. 4.24(b)(i) and (ii)):
 - (i) ***Inspection records not kept.*** The inspection records of 2019 in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and those of 2020 in the Sha Tin Sports Ground were not available for audit examination;

- (ii) *Justifications for not conducting or reducing frequency of inspections not documented.* No records were available showing that CLMs had conducted inspections to the three sports grounds during the review period. For inspections conducted by supervisory staff other than CLMs, the frequencies of inspections as stated in LCSD inspection guidelines were not met in some years (see Table 10). However, no documentation was available showing the justifications for not conducting any inspections (for CLMs) or reducing the frequency of inspections (for supervisory staff other than CLMs); and

Table 10

**Inspections conducted by supervisory staff to sports grounds
(January 2017 to June 2021)**

Sports ground	Requirement on inspection frequency	Year				
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (up to June)
Aberdeen Sports Ground	every 6 months by DLM/ Deputy DLM	✓	✓	N.A. (Note)	✗	✓
	every 3 months by Assistant DLM	✗	✗		✗	✓
Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	every 6 months by DLM/ Deputy DLM	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
	every 3 months by Assistant DLM	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Sha Tin Sports Ground	every 6 months by DLM/ Deputy DLM	✗	✗	✗	N.A. (Note)	✓
	every 3 months by Assistant DLM	✓	✗	✗		✗

Legend: ✓ Inspections conducted by officers in accordance with frequency as stated in LCSD inspection guidelines

✗ Inspections conducted by officers not in accordance with frequency as stated in LCSD inspection guidelines

Source: *Audit analysis of LCSD records*

Note: *The inspection record books were not available for audit examination.*

Remarks: *There were no records on inspections conducted by CLMs.*

- (iii) ***Inconsistent formats in recording inspection results.*** While inspection results were recorded in a more specific manner (e.g. with items inspected and observations) in the Kowloon Bay Sports Ground, only general information on inspection (e.g. date of inspection) was recorded in the Aberdeen Sports Ground and the Sha Tin Sports Ground; and
- (b) for daily inspections conducted by Amenities Assistants stationed in sports grounds (see para. 4.24(b)(iii)), no checklists were provided to facilitate them to conduct the inspections. An exceptional reporting approach was adopted and only occasional records were found in the occurrence book, leaving no trail of the follow-up actions taken.

In view of the deficiencies on inspections as mentioned above and the irregularities identified by Audit in management and maintenance of facilities (see paras. 4.3 to 4.16 and 4.18 to 4.22), Audit considers that LCSD needs to review and update the inspection requirements with a view to achieving the objectives of its inspections (see para. 4.24(a)). LCSD also needs to take measures to ensure that inspections are conducted in accordance with the updated requirements and inspection results are properly recorded to facilitate follow-up actions.

Audit recommendations

4.26 Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

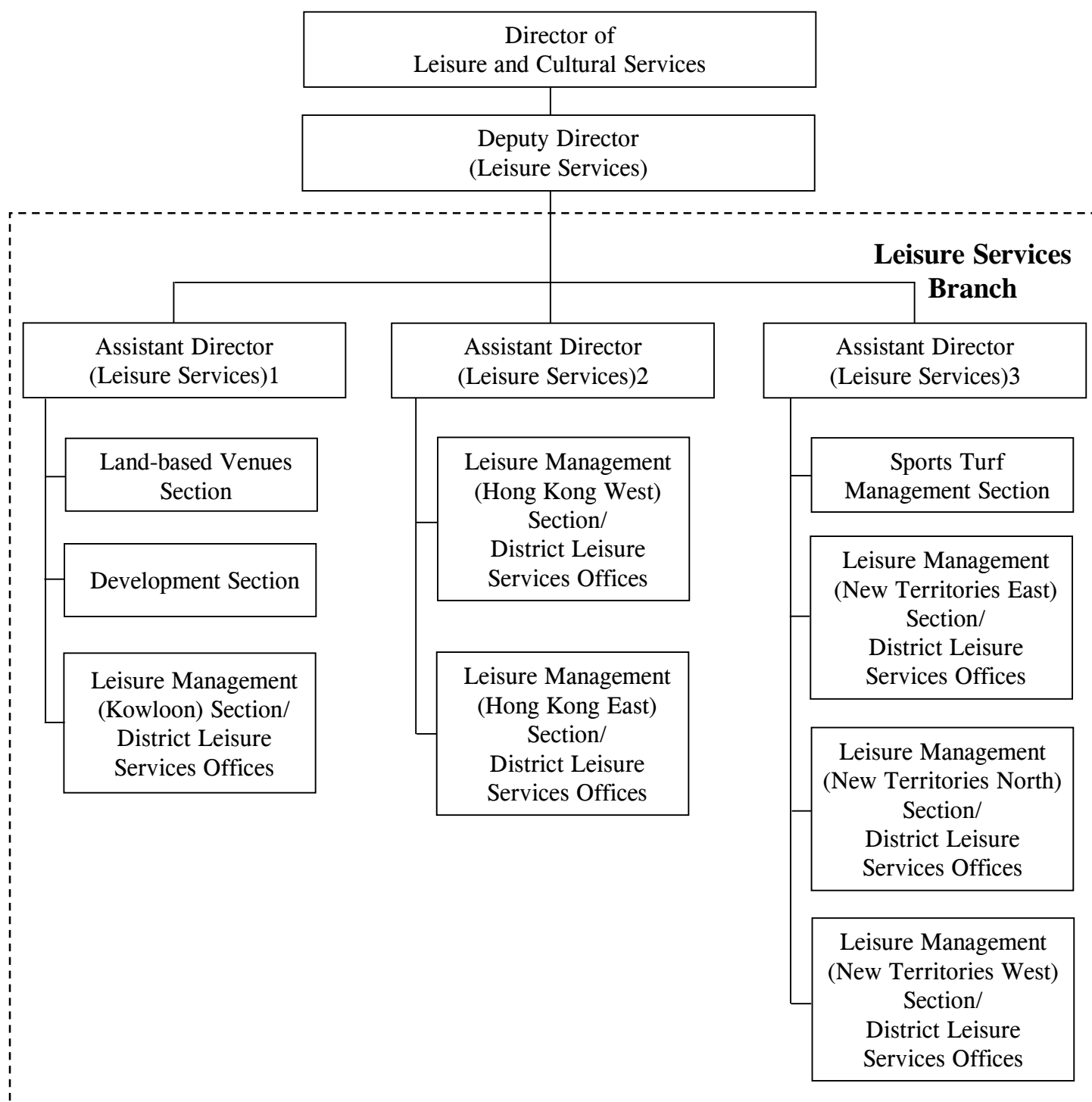
- (a) **review and update the inspection requirements with a view to achieving the objectives of LCSD inspections; and**
- (b) **take measures to ensure that inspections are conducted in accordance with the updated requirements and inspection results are properly recorded to facilitate follow-up actions.**

Response from the Government

4.27 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) LCSD will review its inspection guidelines taking into account the recommendations of Audit, the operational needs and resources availability; and
- (b) DLMs have been reminded to follow LCSD inspection guidelines to conduct regular inspections and keep proper records on the inspection results and follow-up actions.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department:
Organisation chart (extract)
(31 March 2021)**



Source: LCSD records

Remarks: Only the offices/sections related to the provision and management of sports grounds are shown.

**Results of audit examination on
first-aid equipment in three sports grounds
(June to August 2021)**

	Aberdeen Sports Ground	Kowloon Bay Sports Ground	Sha Tin Sports Ground
Weekly or monthly inspections on first-aid equipment between July 2020 and June 2021	No record	Monthly inspections conducted	Weekly inspections conducted for 8 months (Note 1)
<i>Condition of first-aid rooms and first-aid boxes</i>			
Date of Audit inspection	29 June 2021	5 August 2021	23 July 2021
<i>First-aid rooms</i>			
No. of first-aid rooms	1	1	1
No. of standard equipment items that should be provided (Note 2)	4	4	4
No. of standard equipment items not provided	1	2 (Note 3)	3 (Note 3)
<i>First-aid boxes</i>			
No. of first-aid boxes	2 (Note 4)	1	1
No. of standard items that should be provided (Note 5)	38	19	19
No. of standard items not provided	6	—	1
No. of items that had expired	1	—	—
Item list displayed beside first-aid boxes	✗	✗	✗

Source: Audit on-site inspections on 29 June, 23 July and 5 August 2021

Note 1: There were no records on weekly inspections conducted in 4 of the 12 months. According to LCSD, weekly inspections were not conducted in August 2020 and January 2021 because the sports ground was closed amid the COVID-19 epidemic.

Note 2: Standard equipment in each first-aid room comprises hospital bed, blanket, first-aid booklet, and first-aid box.

Note 3: One of the items not provided was the first-aid box.

Note 4: One of the two first-aid boxes was kept in the first-aid room.

Note 5: Examples of standard items in each first-aid box include splint, cold pack, triangular bandage, sterile irrigation solution, and disinfectant.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AED	Automatic external defibrillator
ArchSD	Architectural Services Department
Audit	Audit Commission
CARS	Call Return System
CLM	Chief Leisure Manager
DLM	District Leisure Manager
EMSTF	Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund
HAB	Home Affairs Bureau
HKPL	Hong Kong Premier League
HKPSG	Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines
LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
m	Metres
NSAs	National sports associations
STMS	Sports Turf Management Section