

MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL COMPLEXES

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1. According to a territory-wide physical fitness survey in 2023, swimming is one of the most popular sports in Hong Kong. Under the policy direction of the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is responsible for providing and managing public swimming pool complexes, organising a wide range of activities in order to promote swimming at all levels throughout the community, promoting awareness of water sports safety in LCSD's venues, and improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the provision of recreation and sports services. As of June 2025, LCSD managed 46 public swimming pool complexes under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) and its subsidiary legislation. In 2024-25, the attendance at public swimming pools was 12.6 million, with revenue of \$142.9 million and expenditure of \$1,276.5 million.

2. A public swimming pool complex is open for use by individuals as well as organisations for training, competition and other sports activities. Each complex may include a variety of heated or non-heated pool types such as main pool, secondary pool, training pool, leisure pool and diving pool. LCSD has arranged regular repair and maintenance of swimming pool facilities. To safeguard swimmers, LCSD has employed qualified lifeguards to provide lifesaving services at public swimming pool complexes. LCSD has also launched the progressive swimming scheme to provide more opportunities for individuals of all ages to participate in swimming and enhance their swimming skills through three levels of progressive training courses. As at 30 June 2025, about 2,280 LCSD staff (including 1,690 civil servants and 590 contract staff) were involved in the management of public swimming pool complexes and relevant sports activity programmes. The Audit Commission (Audit) has recently conducted a review to examine LCSD's management of public swimming pool complexes.

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3. *Attendance target for public swimming pools not met in recent years.* Since 2018, LCSD had set in its Controlling Officer's Reports (CORs) the annual target of 13,500,000 for attendance at public swimming pools. However, the attendance targets were not achieved from 2020 to 2024, with the actual attendance falling short of the target by 7% to 73% in each year. Despite the resumption of normalcy from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic since 2023, the attendance targets were not met in 2023 and 2024, and the actual attendance declined by over 10% compared to that in 2018 and 2019 (paras. 2.4 to 2.6).

4. *Need to lay down guidelines for counting and reporting attendance at public swimming pool complexes.* Audit noted that LCSD did not formulate guidelines for counting and reporting the attendance at public swimming pool complexes in its COR. Audit also found that:

- (a) use of public swimming pool complexes by toddlers (i.e. persons aged below 3) was not counted in the reported figures in COR;
- (b) in April 2022, the Hong Kong Swimming Team made use of two public swimming pool complexes for training purpose with a total attendance of 4,383. However, the LCSD staff concerned did not include the athletes concerned in the actual attendance in COR; and
- (c) different practices were adopted by different pool complexes in counting and reporting the number of swimmers (e.g. those who entered a public swimming pool complex through entrances other than the metered entry gates). Of the 401 swimming galas held in 2024, the attendance figures for only 20 (5%) were accurately reported in COR (para. 2.9).

5. *Variations in the number of LCSD's standard swimming pool complexes and population served across 18 districts.* According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), the standard of provision is one standard swimming pool complex per 287,000 population, and a standard swimming pool complex usually contains swimming pools of 50 metres and/or 25 metres long. Audit found that, for the total 7,523,000 population of Hong Kong in mid-2024 (excluding the marine population), 26.2 standard swimming pool complexes were required according to the standard of provision stipulated in HKPSG, and 42 standard

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swimming pool complexes were provided by LCSD for individual admission. In mid-2024, 7 districts had at least one more standard swimming pool complex than HKPSG requirement and the average population served by each pool complex varied significantly across 18 districts (ranging from 82,100 to 342,600 population served by one standard swimming pool complex in each district) (paras. 2.14, 2.16 and 2.17).

6. ***Significant variations in average daily attendance and unit cost per swimmer among public swimming pool complexes.*** Audit found that, in 2024-25, the average daily attendance and the unit LCSD's cost per swimmer varied significantly among the public swimming pool complexes, as follows:

- (a) the average daily attendance of a public swimming pool complex ranged from 77 to 3,142; and
- (b) while the overall average LCSD's cost per swimmer of all the swimming pool complexes was \$101, the unit LCSD's cost per swimmer of individual pool complexes varied significantly (ranging from \$42 to \$763). In particular, there were 26 swimming pool complexes whose unit LCSD's cost per swimmer was above the overall average of \$101 (para. 2.19).

7. ***Need to regularly obtain relevant information on private swimming pools to assess local needs.*** According to HKPSG, private recreation facilities (e.g. swimming pools) should be taken into account in assessing the local needs of a district if they can meet the relevant countability criteria. According to LCSD, while it was aware of the number and locations of private swimming pools uploaded on the website of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD — responsible for regulating the operators of private swimming pools under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance), LCSD did not maintain detailed information on private swimming pool facilities (e.g. maximum capacity of swimming pools), which might affect LCSD's assessment of local needs (paras. 2.20 and 2.21).

8. ***Need to review provision of swimming pool complexes.*** Audit noted that some public swimming pool complexes recorded relatively low average daily attendance or comparatively high unit LCSD's cost per swimmer (see para. 6), and LCSD had planned a number of swimming pool projects. There is a need for LCSD to review the provision of swimming pool complexes including ascertaining the reasons for lower average daily attendance or higher unit LCSD's cost per swimmer

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at some public swimming pool complexes, and take appropriate measures to address the issues. LCSD also needs to consider all the relevant factors (including the average daily attendance and unit cost per swimmer of public swimming pool complexes and details of private swimming pool facilities) when planning swimming pool projects in future (paras. 2.15, 2.22 and 2.24).

9. ***Need to provide more comprehensive information for Finance Committee (FC)'s consideration of public swimming pool projects.*** Audit analysis of the funding papers submitted to the Legislative Council for the 5 most recently approved new public swimming pool projects as of September 2025 revealed that, while FC had been informed of the population of the respective districts, no specific reference had been made to the relevant HKPSG standards in the FC papers in 3 cases. While CSTB and LCSD indicated that HKPSG standards were only among the many factors for considering the provision of a swimming pool complex, Audit also found that FC had not been informed of the maximum capacity of a new swimming pool complex (paras. 2.25 to 2.27).

Provision of lifesaving services

10. ***Persistent shortage of lifeguards during swimming season.*** The operation of public swimming pool complexes during a year can be broadly categorised into the swimming season (from April to October each year) and the non-swimming season (from November each year to March the following year). According to LCSD, there has been persistent shortage of lifeguards at public swimming pool complexes during the swimming season. LCSD conducted 23 recruitment exercises from January 2018 to January 2025 to recruit lifeguards and the respective recruitment targets were not met in 19 exercises with the recruitment rates (i.e. the percentage of the number of lifeguards recruited over the recruitment target) ranging from 13% to 69% (paras. 1.4 and 3.4).

11. ***Need to take more effective measures to minimise inconvenience to the general public due to temporary closure of public swimming pool facilities arising from the shortage of lifeguards.*** According to LCSD guidelines, in the event of a severe shortage of lifeguards, to avoid full closure of swimming pool facilities, the District Leisure Services Offices concerned should flexibly deploy the lifeguards of swimming pool complexes within the same district or the neighbouring districts if needed. If the shortage of lifeguards is still not alleviated, temporary closure of some pool facilities may be considered. Despite the presence of these guidelines, Audit

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found that the partial closure rate (i.e. the percentage of the total number of days with partial closure of pool facilities over the total number of scheduled opening days) of public swimming pool complexes due to the shortage of lifeguards was 30% in 2022, followed by 36% in 2023 and 41% in 2024, and then 38% in 2025 (up to August) (paras. 3.7 and 3.8).

12. ***Need to promptly address lifesaving services contractor's non-compliance with contract requirements and keep under review implementation of trial scheme for outsourcing lifesaving services.*** In August 2024, LCSD launched a trial scheme to outsource the lifesaving services at six public swimming pool complexes to a contractor, with an estimated value of about \$75.9 million under a two-year contract. According to LCSD, from August 2024 to August 2025, the lifesaving services contractor failed to provide the required manpower on seven occasions. Audit found that LCSD took between 4 and 305 days (averaging 100 days) to deduct payment from the contractor and took between 5 and 311 days (averaging 59 days) to issue 7 Default Notices to the contractor. According to LCSD, it will review the implementation of the trial scheme when the current outsourcing contract expires in July 2026 (paras. 3.13, 3.15 and 3.17).

13. ***Need to enhance monitoring of lifeguard performance and expedite the investigation progress.*** LCSD investigated the attendance to duty of lifeguards in seven public swimming pool complexes and found that 45 lifeguards were suspected to have left their duty posts in 2024 without supervisors' permission. According to LCSD, as at 30 September 2025:

- (a) the disciplinary investigations for 30 lifeguards were completed. LCSD completed disciplinary action against 22 lifeguards, including dismissing 2 contract lifeguards, issuing written warnings to 17 lifeguards (i.e. 14 civil servants and 3 contract staff) and terminating the service of 3 civil service lifeguards on probationary terms. The elapsed time from each respective incident to the corresponding disciplinary action ranged from 211 to 388 days (averaging 314 days). Besides, LCSD was also taking disciplinary procedures against the other 8 lifeguards; and
- (b) the disciplinary investigations of the remaining 15 lifeguards were in progress. As at 30 September 2025, 339 days had elapsed since the date of their suspected unauthorised absences from duty (para. 3.25).

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Management of swimming pool facilities

14. ***Need to process block-book applications in accordance with LCSD guidelines.*** Certain pool facilities (e.g. main pools and training pools) are available for group bookings during designated opening hours or session breaks for organising training, competition, etc (i.e. designated use of public swimming pools). LCSD processes block-book applications submitted by priority users such as National Sports Associations (NSAs) before those submitted by non-priority users such as private sports organisations. According to LCSD guidelines, applications from affiliated clubs without the proper endorsement of the parent NSAs/sports organisations or submitted after the application deadlines shall be treated as non-priority applications. Audit visited three swimming pool complexes and examined the block-book application records for 15 applicants with hire dates fell within the period from July 2024 to June 2025 (covering three months for each complex) and found that of 65 applications: (a) 7 (11 %) lacked the required information (i.e. names of authorised coaches) and/or supporting documents (i.e. the relevant copies of valid coaches' certificates); and (b) 28 were submitted after the priority application deadlines and/or lacked the endorsement from the parent NSAs, of which 1 (4 %) was approved before the non-priority application deadline (paras. 1.7, 4.2, 4.4 to 4.6).

15. ***Room for improvement in handling matters relating to hire requirements.*** Audit examined the relevant records for the 15 applicants (see para. 14) and found that there were cases of non-compliances with the terms and conditions of hire for designated use of public swimming pools (hereinafter referred to as terms and conditions of hire) (i.e. delays in payment of hire charges, cancellation of hired lane hours without meeting 14-day notice requirement and/or providing justifiable reasons to LCSD's satisfaction, and non-compliances with capacity limits of the hired facilities). However, for all these cases, there was no documentation indicating that default notices were issued to the hirers concerned, or that the contravention was recorded in the register of breach as required. Besides, while the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance took effect on 23 March 2024, there was no specific clause concerning safeguarding national security in the terms and conditions of hire as of September 2025 (paras. 4.9, 4.10 and 4.12).

16. ***Room for improvement in handling Central Lane Allocation Scheme (CLAS) matters.*** To assist major swimming pool facility users (i.e. primary users) such as NSAs and sports organisations in hiring swimming lanes in main pools for long-term sports development and training, LCSD has implemented CLAS since 2005 under the block-book arrangement (para. 4.3). Audit noted the following issues:

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- (a) ***Need to enhance monitoring of allocation of swimming lanes by LCSD.*** According to LCSD guidelines, when allocating swimming lanes to CLAS primary users for the coming year, LCSD will make reference to their actual utilisation, including take-up rates of lane hours allocated by LCSD under CLAS, in the current year. However, in the period from 2018-19 to 2024-25: (i) excluding 2020-21, the take-up rates ranged from 36% to 73% and LCSD continued to allocate lane hours to primary users under CLAS (e.g. 82,241 lane hours in 2024-25) at levels well above the actual lane hours hired (e.g. 37,133 lane hours in 2023-24) in subsequent years; and (ii) the take-up rates varied among primary users (e.g. ranging from 0% to 45% in 2024-25) (paras. 4.13 and 4.14);
- (b) ***Room for improvement in monitoring allocation of swimming lanes by primary users.*** Of the 15 applicants in the selected period (see para. 14), Audit examined the relevant application and cancellation records for 11 applicants allocated lane hours under CLAS and found that the cancellation rates (i.e. the percentage of applied lane hours cancelled) ranged from 0% to 43% (averaging 12%). For the affiliated club with cancellation rate of 43%, the parent NSA allocated 92 lane hours to the affiliated club in the period from July 2024 to June 2025 even though it cancelled 60 of 129 lane hours allocated in the period from July 2023 to June 2024 (para. 4.17); and
- (c) ***Need to conduct a review on CLAS.*** Audit analysed the number of lane hours hired by the CLAS primary users for main pools in the period from 2018-19 to 2024-25 and noted that while those hired under CLAS decreased generally by 56% from 68,438 in 2018-19 to 29,985 in 2024-25, those hired outside CLAS increased generally by 93% from 32,874 in 2018-19 to 63,488 in 2024-25. Besides, Audit noted that the number of CLAS primary users during the period from 2015-16 to 2024-25 was 7 and there was no documentation indicating that an evaluation of CLAS had been conducted (paras. 4.20 and 4.21).
17. ***Need to enhance compliance with procedures for handling group entries on hire dates.*** Audit examined the relevant application and registration records for the 15 applicants (see para. 14) and found that: (a) of the 1,541 sessions attended, the authorised persons or coaches who signed on the registration forms differed from those listed in the corresponding application forms for 388 (25%) sessions. For 109 (7%) sessions that involved session breaks, no signatures from coaches holding

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the valid lifesaving certificates were found on the registration forms; and (b) in 12 (19%) out of 63 cancelled sessions, the hirer had indicated attendances on the registration forms despite prior notifications of cancellation to LCSD. Upon enquiry, LCSD informed Audit in August 2025 that the registration forms were signed by hirer's authorised person by mistake (para. 4.24).

18. ***Scope for enhancing assessment processes for public coaching area (PCA) designation.*** To promote swimming while taking care of public safety, LCSD has started to designate PCAs for coaching activities in different public swimming pool complexes since 2003. In July 2023, LCSD laid down a mechanism for PCA designation in its guidelines (para. 4.30). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Room for improvement in assessing need for designation of PCAs.*** Audit examined the records of public opinion surveys conducted during the swimming season in 2024 at 35 swimming pool complexes where PCAs had not been designated, and found that the number of questionnaires collected across the 35 complexes varied significantly (ranging from 9 to 2,790). Besides, according to LCSD, to assess whether the criteria (e.g. receiving complaints/suggestions regarding PCA designation from no less than 3 different parties/people in the past 3 years) in the mechanism for PCA designation are met during each swimming season, individual complexes are required to submit monthly returns. Audit examination of the complaint records for two (where PCAs were not designated) of the three swimming pool complexes (see para. 14) over the past 3 years revealed that the required complaint/suggestion thresholds were met for both complexes, which conflicted with the information provided in their monthly returns for the swimming season in 2024 (paras. 4.31 to 4.33); and
- (b) ***Need to lay down criteria to assess on-going need for designation of PCAs.*** Audit noted that, for 9 swimming pool complexes with PCAs designated, no public opinion survey had been conducted. In addition, 7 of these complexes had their PCAs designated between 2003 and 2014. However, there was no documentation indicating that a review of these designations had been conducted since their approval, and no guidelines had been laid down in this regard (para. 4.34).

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19. ***Room for improvement in conducting inspections at public swimming pool complexes and documenting compliance with requirement for raising free residual chlorine to a specified level every night.*** LCSD conducts daily, surprise and holiday inspections at public swimming pool complexes. Audit examined the relevant records for the three swimming pool complexes (see para. 14) and noted that: (a) some inspections were not conducted in accordance with the frequencies stipulated in LCSD guidelines during opening hours in the period from April 2024 to June 2025; and (b) for the daily inspection focusing on cleanliness and sanitation aspects, while there was no documentation indicating that the free residual chlorine level was raised to 3 parts per million (ppm) on any night in August 2024 and June 2025 at one complex (against the requirement for raising to 3 ppm and maintaining for an hour after closing the pools every night to enhance the disinfection effect of the pool water) and no relevant daily inspections were conducted after closing the pools in these two months, the respective swimming pool supervisors reported compliance with the requirement in all relevant cleanliness and sanitation inspection reports (paras. 4.38, 4.39 and 4.41).

20. ***Room for improvement in managing repair and maintenance of facilities.*** Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to maintain proper records for monitoring repair work and ensure timely follow-up on long outstanding cases.*** Audit examined the repair records for the three swimming pool complexes (see para. 14) for August 2024 and March/June 2025 and found that: (i) photographs of the defects before and after repairs were not taken as required; (ii) of 217 repair requests for one complex with a repair register maintained, 13 (6%) lacked the required information (i.e. dates of request or completion), and 8 (4%) were long outstanding (i.e. not completed within 1 month after request) (ranging from 35 to 195 days; averaging 94 days), for which no monthly repair reports were submitted as required; and (iii) no repair register was maintained by the other two complexes (paras. 4.45 and 4.46); and
- (b) ***Room for improvement in scheduling annual maintenance work.*** According to LCSD, annual maintenance is generally scheduled in non-swimming season for non-heated pools and in the period from mid-April to June or in September and October for heated pools (to avoid the heated pool operating periods from mid-November to mid-April and peak months for bookings in July and August). Audit examined the annual maintenance schedule of 46 swimming pool complexes for the period from

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November 2024 to October 2025, and noted that the annual maintenance of all/some swimming pools at some complexes was scheduled during: (i) June, which fell within the peak swimming season (i.e. June to August); (ii) heated pool operating periods; and/or (iii) periods when the maintenance schedule of heated and non-heated pools at two complexes overlapped, resulting in full closure of each complex for 51 days (paras. 1.3, 1.4, 4.2 and 4.47).

Other related issues

21. ***Room for improvement in the delivery of swimming courses.*** A swimming course comprises 10 lessons. Each year, LCSD would inform 18 District Councils of the estimated numbers of the recreation and sports activities to be organised and the participants expected to join these activities in the coming financial year (paras. 5.2 and 5.3). Audit analysis of 2,474 swimming courses organised by LCSD in 2024-25 revealed that:

- (a) ***Estimated numbers of swimming courses and participants not achieved in some districts.*** LCSD did not achieve the estimated numbers of swimming courses and participants in 8 districts (para. 5.4);
- (b) ***Need to better align swimming course offerings with public demand.*** There were 110 (4.5%) courses having subscription rates of 50% or less (mainly courses for children and juniors), while 300 (12.1%) courses had subscription rates exceeding 500% (mainly courses for adults and elderly) (paras. 5.7 and 5.8);
- (c) ***Need to take measures to address low attendance rate of some swimming courses.*** There were 2,221 (89.8%) courses having an average attendance rate of 75% or below, including 12 (0.5%) courses recording an average attendance rate of only 25% or below. However, LCSD did not impose any penalty measures on those participants with low attendance (paras. 5.14 and 5.15); and
- (d) ***Need to take measures to address low passing rate of some swimming courses.*** Course-end assessment was conducted for 2,030 courses, with 816 (40.2%) courses having a passing rate of 50% or below, including 7 (0.4%) courses in which no participant passed the course-end assessment.

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Audit also noted that LCSD guidelines did not require the course instructor to notify participants of their failure reasons (paras. 5.16 and 5.17).

22. ***Issues related to fees and charges for public swimming pools.*** The fees payable for individual admission to a public swimming pool complex are specified in the Public Health and Municipal Services (Fees and Charges) (Leisure Facilities) Regulation (Cap. 132CN) and are hereinafter referred to as statutory fees. On the other hand, fee items set for group booking of public swimming pool facilities by LCSD are hereinafter referred to as administrative fees (para. 1.14). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to review fees and submit fee proposals to the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB) annually.*** According to Financial Circular No. 6/2016 on “Fees and Charges” issued by FSTB, fees should generally be reviewed and, where necessary, revised on an annual basis. After conducting the annual fee reviews, bureaux/departments should derive their fee proposals and forward a self-contained submission (including costing statements) to FSTB. Audit noted that the fees and charges for LCSD’s leisure facilities and services (including public swimming pools) were last revised in 2013. According to the 2013 Policy Address and 2013-14 Budget respectively, LCSD was asked to conduct a comprehensive review of its fee levels and charging policy, and plans for revising the fees and charges were to be submitted by 2015. However, LCSD submitted the fee review results and fee proposals to FSTB only in August 2019 (paras. 5.26, 5.29 and 5.35); and

- (b) ***Need to step up efforts in implementing endorsed fee proposals and consult FSTB on setting of target cost recovery rate for statutory fees.*** For the statutory fees, the actual cost recovery rate ranged from 2.3% to 10.3% in 2018-19 to 2024-25. For the administrative fees, the actual cost recovery rate in 2019-20 to 2024-25 (ranging from 3.3% to 12.1%) did not meet the target cost recovery rate of 14% set by FSTB. Audit noted that, although LCSD had submitted a number of fee proposals to FSTB since August 2019, the fees and charges for LCSD’s leisure facilities and services (including public swimming pools) were not revised as of September 2025. Audit also noted that a target cost recovery rate had not been set for the statutory fees as of September 2025 (paras. 5.28, 5.32 and 5.35).

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23. *Need to properly record complaints in complaint registers.* Audit examination of the complaint records for the three swimming pool complexes (see para. 14) and LCSD's Aquatic Venues Section (which handles complaints relating to the overall management of public swimming pool complexes) in 2024-25 found that one complex and the Aquatic Venues Section did not maintain a complaint register as required, despite 117 and 2 complaints were received respectively (para. 5.45).

24. *Need to step up public education efforts on water safety to prevent occurrence of drowning incidents.* For the seven drowning incidents in 2024, most of the victims were aged 60 or above (75 on average). According to LCSD, they were all swimming alone at the time of the incidents, with some known to be good swimmers and others not possessing good swimming skills. Audit noted that LCSD had implemented various measures to promote water safety, including publishing the Swimmer's Handbook to provide the general public with water safety advice for enhancing their safety awareness. However, the occurrence of drowning incidents indicates a need for LCSD to step up public education efforts on water safety to prevent such occurrence as far as possible (para. 5.55).

Audit recommendations

25. **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:**

Provision and utilisation of public swimming pool complexes

- (a) **formulate a multi-pronged strategy to improve attendance at public swimming pool complexes (e.g. strengthening efforts to promote swimming, and conducting public opinion surveys to better ascertain users' preference, so that the swimming pool services more effectively align with their needs and interests) (para. 2.11(a));**
- (b) **lay down guidelines for counting and reporting the attendance at public swimming pool complexes in COR (including the requirement to count toddlers and athletes using the pool complexes) and take measures to ensure that consistent swimming pool attendance records are maintained (para. 2.11(c));**

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- (c) obtain information on the details of private swimming pool facilities from FEHD regularly in order to assess the local needs for swimming pools according to HKPSG (para. 2.28(a));
- (d) review the provision of swimming pool complexes including ascertaining the reasons for lower average daily attendance or higher unit LCSD's cost per swimmer at some public swimming pool complexes, and take appropriate measures to address the issues (para. 2.28(b));
- (e) consider all relevant factors, including the average daily attendance and unit cost per swimmer of public swimming pool complexes and details of private swimming pool facilities, when planning swimming pool projects in future (para. 2.28(c));
- (f) in collaboration with the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, when seeking funding approval for future swimming pool projects, provide FC with more comprehensive information such as the relevant HKPSG standards, the compliance status and the maximum capacity of the proposed swimming pool complexes (para. 2.29);

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- (g) keep in view the supply of lifeguards potentially available to LCSD's swimming facilities, continue to explore different measures to address the shortage of lifeguards during the swimming season and take appropriate follow-up actions (para. 3.18(a));
- (h) take more effective measures to minimise inconvenience to the general public due to the temporary closure of public swimming pool facilities arising from the shortage of lifeguards (para. 3.18(b));
- (i) if a contractor fails to provide the required manpower to LCSD, promptly deduct payment from the contractor and issue Default Notices, and take into account the audit observations and recommendations in this Audit Report when reviewing the trial scheme for outsourcing lifesaving services (para. 3.18(d) and (e));

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- (j) **strengthen measures to prevent future unauthorised absences of lifeguards from their designated duty posts (e.g. use of technology), and expedite the investigations into the outstanding cases (para. 3.31(b));**

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- (k) **take measures to ensure that block-book applications are processed in accordance with LCSD guidelines (para. 4.28(a));**
- (l) **take measures to ensure hirers' compliance with the terms and conditions of hire and that follow-up actions are taken against their non-compliances in accordance with LCSD guidelines, and incorporate specific clauses concerning safeguarding national security in terms and conditions of hire for designated use of public swimming pools (para. 4.28(b)(i) and (d));**
- (m) **regarding CLAS, take measures to ensure that LCSD staff follows the CLAS allocation procedures stipulated in LCSD guidelines, and conduct a review on CLAS, taking into account the reasons for cancellation and declining user preferences for CLAS as well as the audit observations and recommendations in this Audit Report, and take follow-up actions as appropriate (para. 4.28(e)(i) and (v));**
- (n) **take measures to ensure that LCSD staff follows the procedures for handling group entries stipulated in LCSD guidelines, and review the incorrect signed-in attendance records identified by Audit and take follow-up actions as appropriate (para. 4.28(g));**
- (o) **align the practices in conducting public opinion surveys and take measures to enhance the accuracy of the information reported in the monthly returns for the mechanism for PCA designation by individual swimming pool complexes (para. 4.36(a));**
- (p) **for swimming pool complexes with PCAs designated, lay down the criteria to assess the on-going need for such designations in LCSD guidelines (para. 4.36(c));**

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- (q) **take measures to ensure that inspections at public swimming pool complexes are conducted in accordance with the frequencies stipulated in LCSD guidelines and compliance with the requirement for raising the free residual chlorine in pool water to a specified level every night is documented, and review the design of the daily inspection reports (para. 4.51(a) to (c));**
- (r) **take measures to ensure that proper records for monitoring repair work are maintained and long outstanding cases are timely followed up, and review the annual maintenance schedule (para. 4.51(f) and (g));**

Other related issues

- (s) **take measures to achieve the estimated numbers for swimming courses and participants as far as possible, take into account the subscription patterns for swimming courses, and regularly adjust the course offerings as appropriate to better align with participant needs and demand trends (para. 5.24(a));**
- (t) **take measures to enhance the attendance rate of swimming courses, including ascertaining the reasons for low attendance and taking appropriate measures to address these issues, and considering the imposition of appropriate penalty measures on those participants with low attendance (para. 5.24(d));**
- (u) **take measures to improve the passing rate of swimming courses as far as possible, including notifying participants of their failure reasons (para. 5.24(e));**
- (v) **review the fees and charges for public swimming pools and submit the related fee proposals (including costing statements) to FSTB on an annual basis in accordance with Financial Circular No. 6/2016 (para. 5.40(a));**
- (w) **step up efforts in finalising and implementing the fee proposals endorsed by FSTB and CSTB, and consult FSTB on whether a target cost recovery rate should be set for the statutory fees for individual admission to a public swimming pool complex (para. 5.40(b));**

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- (x) **take measures to ensure that the complaints are properly recorded in the complaint register in accordance with LCSD guidelines (para. 5.48(a)); and**

- (y) **taking into account the review reports on drowning incidents and the audit findings in this Audit Report, step up public education efforts on water safety to prevent occurrence of drowning incidents as far as possible (e.g. providing targeted messages to specific groups highlighting risk factors) (para. 5.57(a)).**

Response from the Government

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