

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(PL)343**

**(Question Serial No. 7154)**

Head: (91) Lands Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (-) Not Specified  
Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Ms Bernadette LINN)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the site of Sha Tin Racecourse, the Government approved the grant of a 50-year lease to the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) at a premium of HK\$660 million in June 2016. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the conditions and criteria for the Government to approve and change the nature of the lease granted to HKJC (changed from a private recreational lease to a special purpose lease)?
2. According to the existing Master Layout Plan for Sha Tin Racecourse, was the Lands Department (Lands D) aware that HKJC would change the existing use of Sha Tin Racecourse? What were the criteria for approving the change of use of the racecourse site? Please provide the Sha Tin Racecourse development plan, layout plan and sequence of development.
3. Large-scale stables and horse racing facilities are under construction in Conghua District, Guangdong Province by HKJC and it is planned that the horses being kept in Sha Tin Racecourse will be moved there. Does Lands D know any future changes to the present stable area in Sha Tin Racecourse? What will be the use after such changes?
4. If the Government does not know the answers to the above questions, including the future development of Sha Tin Racecourse by HKJC, and change of land use, why was a 50-year special purpose lease granted to HKJC instead of a short-term 15-year private recreational lease as usual? Will the Government provide the reasons for approving the lease renewal?

Asked by: Hon CHU Hoi-dick (Member Question No. 60)

Reply:

Having consulted the Home Affairs Bureau, our reply to all parts of the question is as follows:

The Sha Tin Racecourse was first granted to the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) for horse racing and related purposes under a Private Recreational Lease in 1977, with the main objective of providing the public with facilities to enjoy horse racing and place bets legally. HKJC, the grantee of the land concerned, is a not-for-profit organisation. After the deduction of tax, its income from horse racing activities held in the Sha Tin Racecourse is used for running the racecourse, and supporting social services and charitable causes. Taking into account the unique nature of the Sha Tin Racecourse, the Government, with the approval of the Chief Executive-in-Council in 2015, granted HKJC a 50-year special purpose lease to continue with the current use of the land as a racecourse and related purposes, so as to facilitate the long-term planning and development of horse racing operations and other community facilities.

The conditions of the new land lease are similar to the original conditions: the subject land can be used for horse racing, charity and non-profit-making activities, a members' club and quarters for HKJC employees and horse-racing-related personnel. The uses and development of the Sha Tin Racecourse are subject to the Master Layout Plans (MLPs) stipulated under the lease. The MLPs set out the distribution and details of land uses within the Sha Tin Racecourse, including the location, use, area and height of the buildings. HKJC cannot alter the uses of land or buildings as set out in the MLPs except with the consent of the Director of Lands. If HKJC applies to alter the MLPs, the Lands Department (Lands D) will handle the application according to the established procedures, including consultation with relevant bureaux/departments, and may impose additional terms and conditions, including the payment of an additional premium as appropriate, if consent is given.

Currently, the permitted uses as stipulated in the MLPs are basically the established facilities in the Sha Tin Racecourse. According to the information provided by HKJC, other than upgrading the stables to modern standards, no changes are planned for the present stable area in the Sha Tin Racecourse. HKJC's development in Conghua District, Guangdong Province, aims to provide additional facilities which cannot be accommodated in the Sha Tin Racecourse (e.g. pre-training facilities, uphill gallop, spelling and rehabilitation facilities). These facilities could not and would not replace the functions of the stables and training facilities currently available in the Sha Tin Racecourse for jockeys and horses. In other words, the core stables and training operations will stay at the Sha Tin Racecourse and the development in Conghua District only serves to complement the training facilities in the Sha Tin Racecourse.

While maintaining the established facilities and current uses of the Sha Tin Racecourse (including the stable area), HKJC has proposed to implement a number of initiatives and projects in the Racecourse for the benefit of the public. First, HKJC will widen the footpath and cycle track along Shing Mun River near the Sha Tin Racecourse at its own expense,

which will benefit both pedestrians and cyclists. Secondly, HKJC has extended the opening hours of Penfold Park (the Park) to the public from 39 hours per week to an average of 60 hours per week, so long as horse racing and training activities and public safety are not compromised. These enhancements have already been incorporated into the land lease and the MLPs.

Thirdly, HKJC is planning to enhance the leisure facilities in the Park according to its unique topography and greenery (for example by enhancing the greening effect and providing a barrier in the dog garden to accommodate the needs of both dog lovers and other park users), and renovate other ancillary facilities in the Park. To preserve the Olympic spirit and promote the equestrian sport, community activities such as those featuring equestrianism and mini ponies will be held in the Park from time to time for the public to enjoy the interaction with horses. HKJC is currently working on the design and planning work.

Lastly, HKJC plans to develop new sports facilities in the Sha Tin Racecourse for public use. Its initial plan is to provide additional sport facilities such as basketball court(s) and volleyball court(s) in the covered spectator stand connecting the Fo Tan East Rail Station, which will be open to the public on non-race days.

These proposals have not yet been included in the existing MLPs, and would require the incorporation of “Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture” as a Column 2 use under the “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Race Course” zone on the draft Sha Tin Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/ST/33. Amendments to the Sha Tin OZP are being proposed to effect such incorporation. Upon approval of the amended Sha Tin OZP and obtaining the relevant planning approval, HKJC will apply to Lands D for amendment of the MLPs to implement the above proposals.

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