

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)149**

**(Question Serial No. 1495)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding the actions against food premises with illegal extension of food business area, the Department has earlier on set up a task force in Yuen Long district and the efforts in containing the problem of unauthorised extension of business area by restaurants have been effective. To sustain the effectiveness, it is necessary to maintain the task force teams to prevent the problem from resurging. In this connection, please advise on the following:

- (a) whether the Department will consider expanding the task force to extend inspections to other districts where the problem is more serious, thereby containing the problem of unauthorised extension by restaurants and stepping up enforcement actions against unauthorised shop front extensions;
- (b) if yes for (a), the scale of expansion, as well as the manpower and estimated expenditure to be involved;
- (c) whether sufficient resources and manpower have been earmarked for maintaining the operation of the task force;
- (d) whether the Department will consider setting up a dedicated section to oversee the task force; and
- (e) if yes for (d), the estimated cost and staffing arrangement.

Asked by: Hon TIEN Puk-sun, Michael (Member Question No. 54)

Reply:

- (a) and (b) Prior to the establishment of the Food Business Extension Control Task Force (TF), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) put together a pilot team in May 2013 to combat the illegal outside seating accommodation (OSA) blackspots in Tsuen Wan District

where the problem of illegal OSA was the most serious then. Having put the problem in Tsuen Wan District under control, the TF moved on to Kwai Tsing District and subsequently to Sha Tin District which had similar problems. To prevent the recurrence of illegal OSA, the TF maintained close surveillance of blackspots previously tackled. The strategy has proven successful in containing the illegal OSA problem in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing and Sha Tin Districts.

To better combat illegal OSA of food premises, the Department set up two TF teams in June 2014. The two TF teams were deployed to Yuen Long District where the problem of illegal OSA was extensive. With enforcement action taken by the teams since June 2014, the extent of illegal OSA in the District has receded significantly.

The Department will make the best use of the TF teams and keep under review the staffing situation from time to time to meet operational needs.

- (c), (d) and (e) Currently, there are 32 posts (comprising three Senior Health Inspectors and 29 Health Inspectors) deployed to support the operation of the TF. We shall monitor closely the incidence and extent of illegal OSA and deploy resources to tackle the problem accordingly. Should reinforcement of the TF be considered necessary, we shall make the corresponding arrangements.

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