

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)156**

**(Question Serial No. 0399)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under Programme (3), it is stated that the Department will take action to close public markets which are under-utilised in the coming year. Please advise:

1. on the locations of the public markets to be closed in the coming year and the number of market stalls that will be affected; whether the Department will consider improving the design of the under-utilised public markets to enhance patronage instead of closing them; and
2. whether the Department will, in the coming year, improve the design of six markets (Tsuen Wan Market, Yau Ma Tei Market, Ngau Chi Wan Market, Sheung Fung Street Market in Diamond Hill, Lockhart Road Market in Wan Chai and Wing Fong Street Market in Kwai Chung), such as reconfiguration of floor drains and retrofitting of air-conditioning, as recommended in the Report of the Consultancy Study on Ways to Improve the Operating Environment of Public Markets completed earlier; if yes, the details including the expected completion date of the above improvement works and the expenditure and manpower to be involved; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing (Member Question No. 22)

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows-

1. Due to demographic changes, new development/redevelopment projects and competition from other fresh provision outlets, the appeal of some public markets has diminished thus leading to reduced patronage and high vacancy rates. When assessing the viability of such markets and considering whether they are to be closed, we will look into a host of factors, including vacancy rate, prospects for improvement, availability of alternative sources of fresh provision outlets in the vicinity, the likely cost-effectiveness of upgrading works and the views of the relevant district councils, etc.

2. In December 2013, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) commissioned a consultant for developing proposals to improve the operating environment of public markets thereby enabling them to fulfil the functions expected of them. The consultant has developed a set of criteria on the basis of which six markets have been selected for study. It has proposed improvement measures for these six markets which it has further proposed could serve as prototypes for improvement options for other markets. In January 2015, FHB, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the consultant briefed the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets (under the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene) on the key findings of the consultancy study and the Government's preliminary thinking. The consultant is finalising the report with regard to the views and comments received.

The Government will further study the consultant's improvement options in consultation with the Architectural Services Department and other relevant government departments. In developing concrete proposals for individuals markets, we will consult the relevant Market Management Consultative Committees as appropriate and take into account tenants' views and any technical and operational constraints.

In 2015, we plan to put forward improvement proposals for a number of markets, which may provide reference for improvements to other public markets in future.

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