

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)109**

**(Question Serial No. 1277)**

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:

Please provide information on the following:

- (1) the resources and manpower allocated by the Department for taking forward and promoting the new hawker policy, as well as the routine duties involved; and
- (2) whether the Department has reviewed the effectiveness of the new hawker policy since its implementation, including striking a balance among the interests of District Councils, residents, tourists and hawkers; and whether the Department will take the initiative to mediate in stakeholders' disputes; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Member Question No. 29)

Reply:

Hawker management and control is carried out by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) involving a revised estimate of expenditure of about \$1,006 million in 2015-16.

The LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene Subcommittee on Hawker Policy (the Subcommittee) was briefed in March 2015 on the principles underpinning the Government's current policy on the management of hawkers.

In gist, the Government seeks to formulate a hawker policy which can strike an optimal balance between allowing licensed hawking business to thrive on the one hand, and meeting other legitimate concerns in addition to ensuring food safety, environmental hygiene, and public security on the other. More specifically, we have laid out before the Subcommittee a number of proposals that the Government is prepared to look into (on top of measures that are being pursued), as follows:

- (a) under the Hawker Assistance Scheme (HAS), all 496 hawker stalls which are located directly in front of staircase discharge points of adjacent buildings or obstructing the

operation of fire engines or other emergency vehicular access have been duly relocated. The Department would continue to follow up and encourage more hawkers to reconstruct their stall structures to meet the specified fire safety requirements. In the course of administering the HAS (which will run up to mid-2018), we would endeavour to identify areas which could bring about enhancement to the hawking environment, including rationalising the overall layout of hawker areas where circumstances permit, and enhancing electrical safety;

- (b) on the question of whether we should re-issue new hawker licences to fill vacant pitches in the relevant hawker areas, the Government would carefully consider the case at a suitable time, taking into account the circumstances of individual hawker areas, including their fire safety and environmental hygiene situations, the business environment, comments of relevant departments, as well as the views of the relevant District Council (DC) and local residents;
- (c) for “Dai Pai Tong” licences, subject to the support of the relevant DCs, we are prepared to consider issuing new Dai Pai Tong licences on a pilot basis;
- (d) on the conversion of public markets with low occupancy rate into off-street cooked food centre, the Government keeps an open mind towards proposals on new modes of hawker operation. We may consider converting, on a pilot basis, an existing public market with a low occupancy rate into an off-street cooked food centre, which would provide operating space for individual cooked food vendors to provide traditional Dai Pai Tong type of cooked meals, traditional snacks or other forms of light refreshment; and
- (e) as regards open-air hawker bazaars, the Government keeps an open mind towards district-led proposals on local bazaars and their mode of operation, so long as food safety and environmental hygiene would not be compromised.

With the support of the relevant DC, one organisation held a bazaar in Sham Shui Po District in the summer of 2015. In November 2015, the Food and Health Bureau received proposals to set up local bazaars in Yuen Long District, North District, Islands District and Sham Shui Po District. We have written to the Chairmen of the relevant DCs and invited them to facilitate the discussion of these proposals at the DCs as soon as practicable.

We are using existing resources to take on the above work. As and when necessary, we would seek additional resources in accordance with established procedures.

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