

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)114

(Question Serial No. 2672)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

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:

1. With regard to the work of continuing to improve the management and upgrade the facilities of public markets and carrying out promotional activities, please provide information on the details of such promotional activities in 2016-17 and the expenditure in this respect.
2. With regard to the work of assisting the Food and Health Bureau in developing proposals for improving the operating environment of public markets, taking into account the recommendations of the consultancy study conducted in 2014, please advise on the proposals to be formulated in 2016-17, as well as the manpower and expenditure in this respect.
3. Please advise on the public markets which will be closed in 2016-17.
4. Please advise whether manpower and financial provision were/have been earmarked to assist non-government organisations to promote food grouping and collection in public markets in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17; if yes, please advise on the manpower, as well as the actual, revised and estimated expenditure, for these three years.

Asked by: Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan (Member Question No. 5)

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows-

1. In 2016-17, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) will continue to conduct promotional activities to enhance the patronage of existing public markets. These include thematic exhibitions and workshops, festive celebration activities, display of multi-language recipes, publication of booklets and quarterly newsletters to provide updated market information as well as other promotional activities that could help to attract members of the public to visit the public markets. The estimated cost of these promotional activities in 2016-17 is \$7 million.

2. The Consultant selected six representative markets for detailed study and put forward specific improvement recommendations. The six markets are Tsuen Wan Market, Yau Ma Tei Market, Ngau Chi Wan Market, Sheung Fung Street Market, Lockhart Road Market and Wing Fong Street Market. The Government is following up the specific improvement proposals for these markets in phases. In line with existing practices for taking forward market improvement projects, the Department consulted the Market Management Consultative Committees (MMCCs) of Sheung Fung Street Market and Lockhart Road Market in the fourth quarter of 2015 on the recommended improvement works. The MMCCs expressed support for some of the proposals that do not require temporary closure of stalls or suspension of business. The Department is carefully considering their views and will conduct feasibility studies and seek funding according to the established mechanism for taking forward the improvement works at these two markets. We will start following up the Consultant's recommended improvements for the other four markets in 2016-17. The experience gained and the improvement recommendations taken forward will serve as reference for pursuing improvements to other similar markets in future.

The Consultant also suggested implementing other improvement measures relating to the management, hygiene, as well as marketing and promotion of public markets. As pointed out by the Consultant, the pursuit of these measures will incur additional costs, require additional resources for management, and require the setting of priorities for implementation. On the management of public markets, the Department agrees with the Consultant that priority should be given to tackling inactive stalls and keeping markets clean and hygienic in general. The Department will sustain its promotional efforts with a view to increasing customer flows in public markets and improving business viability. The Department plans to create an additional 13 civil service foreman posts in 2016-17 with an annual expenditure of \$3 million to strengthen the existing manpower in market management.

Apart from the improvement works for the six markets selected by the consultant, we have been implementing various improvement works in public markets to improve the operating environment. In 2016-17, in addition to regular maintenance and daily management of markets, the Department will carry out improvement works in Fo Tan Cooked Food Market (East), Fo Tan Cooked Food Market (West), Kwun Chung Market, Haiphong Road Temporary Market, Pei Ho Street Market and Tsuen Wan Market. The estimated cost of these improvement works is \$68.5 million. The scope of works may include installation of a goods lift, improvement of ventilation, lighting systems and fire services, refurbishment of external walls, refurbishment of toilets, etc.

3. Despite the abovementioned measures to increase the patronage of existing public markets, as a result of demographic changes, new development/redevelopment projects and competition from other fresh provision outlets, the appeal of some public markets has been diminishing over time thus leading to reduced patronage and high vacancy rates. When considering whether an under-utilised market is to be closed, we will take into account a host of factors, including vacancy rate, prospects for improvement, availability of alternative sources of fresh provision outlets in the vicinity, and the likely cost-effectiveness of upgrading works and the views of the relevant District Councils, etc. The Department will work with relevant

Bureaux/Departments and District Councils on identification of public markets that may be closed.

4. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) is taking the lead in engaging non-government organisations in source separation of food waste in public markets. We would work closely with EPD in collecting food waste so separated, and have embarked on a pilot project in one selected market in early 2016.

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