

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)134

(Question Serial No. 3194)

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:

In August last year, the Government notified the stall owners of Yen Chow Street Temporary Hawker Bazaar (the bazaar) in Sham Shui Po that the bazaar would be closed down so that the site concerned could be resumed and used for providing subsidised housing. With regard to the relocation of the bazaar, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. the latest progress of the discussion with the stall owners about relocation arrangement;
2. the estimated expenditure for closing the bazaar in 2016-17; and
3. given that the Development Bureau has put in place a scheme to promote the utilisation of spaces underneath flyovers, whether Sham Shui Po has such spaces which the Department considers suitable for the relocation of the bazaar; if yes, the specific location(s) and details.

Asked by: Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun (Member Question No. 54)

Reply:

- (1) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has earlier presented various proposals to the licensed hawkers of the Yen Chow Street Temporary Hawker Bazaar (the cloth bazaar). By January 2016, the Department has reached a general consensus with the licensed hawkers of the cloth bazaar regarding the exit arrangement, with some opting to surrender their hawker licences in return for an ex-gratia payment, and others opting for continuation of business by moving to on-street fixed pitch hawker stalls.

The exit plans formulated for the licensed cloth hawkers do not apply to the unlicensed operators of the cloth bazaar. From the policy as well as legal points of view, there does not exist a cogent basis for adopting the same arrangements for both licensed and

unlicensed operators, or else the integrity of the licensing regime cannot be upheld. However, having regard to the fact that the cloth bazaar has been in operation for many years, the age of the operators, the contributions that they have made to the clothing, tailoring and related industries of Hong Kong, as well as the historical reasons underlying the presence of unlicensed operations at the venue, the Government is prepared to consider making special arrangement in this case and formulate a discretionary arrangement for the eligible unlicensed cloth hawkers, on condition that the Department's existing facilities close to the cloth bazaar could be put to more optimal use with the hawkers concerned relocated collectively thereto, thereby helping to preserve the original characteristics of the cloth bazaar as far as practicable whilst meeting, in a balanced manner, the needs of the district for other development.

In this regard, the Department has put forward a proposal to relocate the cloth bazaar to the Tung Chau Street Temporary Market (TCSTM). We consider the relocation of the cloth bazaar to the TCSTM a practical, feasible and win-win option that is of benefit to all parties concerned. It allows the licensed or eligible unlicensed cloth hawkers to continue their business operations collectively in Sham Shui Po, helping to preserve the economic characteristics of the district. Upon relocation, the facilities of the cloth market will be enhanced with additional space for further development. Besides, the existing cloth bazaar site could be released for Home Ownership Scheme development, thus benefiting members of the public with housing needs. Discussion on the relocation arrangements is going on.

- (2) The work on closure of the cloth bazaar is carried out by existing staff. There is no breakdown on the expenditure involved.
- (3) Regarding the proposal to collectively relocate the operators of the cloth bazaar to another place within the Sham Shui Po District other than the TCSTM, relevant departments have indicated that there is currently no vacant government land of similar size that is suitable for relocation in the vicinity of the cloth bazaar.

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