

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)08

(Question Serial No. S0018)

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:

Given that the five-year Assistance Scheme for Hawkers in Fixed-pitch Hawker Areas has been implemented for two and a half years, please advise why there has been no interim review; and whether the Department will not conduct any review until the completion of the scheme in 2018. At present, members of the public and small business operators are in want of spaces. Ordinary citizens cannot afford the soaring shop rental except the big companies. As a result, with the small business operators being crowded out of the market, only large shopping malls and chain stores can survive in the community. Nobody wants this to happen. People like to have varied choices and goods with characteristics. Over the past year, bazaars were set up by local communities almost every week, which became popular attractions for the public. It shows that people are tired of being mallgoers. Has the Secretary for Food and Health ever been to these local bazaars?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (Member Question No.)

Reply:

The five-year Assistance Scheme for Hawkers in Fixed-pitch Hawker Areas (HAS), which commenced on 3 June 2013, aims to provide one-off financial assistance to about 4 300 hawkers in 43 hawker areas for stall reconstruction and relocation in order to improve fire safety. Besides, an ex-gratia payment (EGP) is offered under the HAS for voluntary surrender of hawker licences to the Government. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has made good progress in implementing the scheme. Eligible hawkers who have not yet exercised their option to surrender their licence (in return for an EGP) or apply for a grant to reconstruct their stalls may do so before the HAS expires in June 2018. We reported progress of the HAS to the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in December 2015.

Going forward, the Department would, in the course of administering the HAS, endeavor to identify areas which could bring about enhancement to the hawking environment. This may include rationalising the overall layout of hawker stalls where circumstances permit. On whether to re-issue new hawker licences to fill any vacant pitches in the relevant hawker

areas, the Department 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 and local residents.

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