

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)329

(Question Serial No. 4649)

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:

Last year, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) already stated that it would close public markets which were under-utilised. Given the indication by the Department that the same actions will be taken in the coming year, please advise on the following:

1. the number of public markets closed last year as a result of under-utilisation;
2. the public markets which the Department is planning to close (including their names, locations and occupancy rates set out in tabular form); and
3. the measures to improve the letting percentage of market stalls.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Member Question No. 153)

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows-

1. 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 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) did not close any public market last year.
2. The following public markets are planned to be closed in 2017-18:

| Name of Market | Location | Occupancy rate * (as at 31 December 2016) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Shau Kei Wan Market | Shau Kei Wan, Eastern District | 56% |

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Tsuen King Circuit Market | Tsuen King Circuit, Tsuen Wan | 20% |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|

*Occupancy rate is the percentage of let-out stalls versus the total number of stalls in the market. A sizable portion of the occupied (i.e. leased) stalls are not in active operation, e.g. for the Shau Kei Wan Market, of the 46 occupied stalls, only 19 stalls are actively in operation.

3. As an on-going initiative, the Department has been taking forward measures to improve the operating environment of public markets, including replacement of aged lifts and escalators, improvement of ventilation, lighting systems and fire services, refurbishment of external walls, refurbishment of toilets, etc. as appropriate. Promotional activities are also conducted to enhance the patronage of public markets. These include thematic exhibitions and workshops, festive celebration activities, display of multi-languages recipes as well as publication of booklets and quarterly newsletters to provide updated market information. In addition, the Department will continue, as appropriate, to let out long-standing vacant stalls at reduced upset auction prices and introduce a greater variety of service trade stalls to enhance the occupancy rate of public markets.

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