

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)229

(Question Serial No. 3598)

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 advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) details of launching a Market Modernisation Programme in 2018-19 under this Programme and the expenditure involved; and
- 2) the locations of the targeted public markets which are under-utilised and intended to be closed over the next 3 years;

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 146)

Reply:

(1) In his Budget Speech delivered in February 2018, the Financial Secretary announced that \$2 billion would be earmarked for implementing a Market Modernisation Programme (MMP) over the next 10 years. This will entail a comprehensive review of public markets managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department), and improvement works including early installation of air-conditioning (A/C) systems, major overhaul or redevelopment, with a view to improving the operating environment of the markets and putting the land resources to most gainful use. The project scope may include A/C, re-design and re-zoning of stalls, re-configuration of layout, drainage improvement, upgrading works for fire services installations, electricity supply, toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting, signage, replacement of floor tiles, provision of barrier free access, façade and external wall decoration, lifts and escalators, etc. as appropriate. A dedicated team has been set up in the Department to take forward the MMP and other reviews.

There is no pre-set limit on the number of markets that may benefit from the dedicated funding, which would depend on the actual circumstances of individual markets interested, scope and complexity of works proposed, and the mix of projects agreed over time. Public markets would be considered with regard to the physical condition of the markets concerned, their geographical location and distribution, business viability, tenants' readiness, etc.

The capital works expenditure and recurrent costs of any project could only be determined when the scope of works is finalised, and upon completion of technical feasibility studies and cost-effectiveness assessment.

(2) 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, with some having very low patronage and high vacancy rates. Closure of such markets may release precious land resources for more gainful use in terms of better serving the community. 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 consult the relevant District Council(s) and the market tenants to be affected on any market closure plans.

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