

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)349

(Question Serial No. 4309)

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 2017-18, 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 2018-19, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. the number of public markets closed in 2017-18 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 occupancy rate of market stalls.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 263)

Reply:

1. In 2017-18, 2 markets, namely Shau Kei Wan Market and Tsuen King Circuit Market were closed due to consistently high vacancy rate.
- 2.&3. 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 to better serve the community. When considering whether an under-utilised market is to be closed, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) 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.

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 festive celebration and thematic activities, display of multi-language recipes as well as publication of booklets which provide updated market information. The Department will continue 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. A dedicated team, headed by a D2 officer, has also been set up in the Department to draw up a programme to modernise, revitalise and consolidate existing public markets as appropriate and undertake other reviews, with a view to upgrading market facilities and identifying other management measures to improve the overall viability of the markets concerned.

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