

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)210**

**(Question Serial No. 2016)**

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 2019-20, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will take action to close public markets which are under-utilised. Please advise on:

1. the criteria used to define "under-utilised" markets; and
2. the list of public markets which are intended to be closed, the schedule and staff establishment involved (please set out in tabular form the number of staff with a breakdown by post) and the estimated expenditure.

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

As promulgated in the 2018 Policy Address, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) is conducting a comprehensive review of the usage and development potential of existing markets, with a view to formulating appropriate development plans for meeting the policy objectives of optimising land uses, benefitting the public and promoting district development.

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 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, 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.

The Department is planning to close Cheung Sha Wan Cooked Food Market and Tui Min Hoi Market in 2019-20. A dedicated team has been set up in the Department to take forward, among other things, the Market Modernisation Programme and other reviews, including closure of markets, with the support of 37 staff. They include 4 Administrative Officer Grade posts, 13 Health Inspector Grade posts, 2 Executive Officer Grade posts, 3 Clerical Officer Grade posts, 2 Personal Secretary Grade posts and 13 contract staff. The estimated expenditure to be incurred in 2019-20 is \$33.9 million.

- End -