

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)134

(Question Serial No. 0035)

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 Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2020-21 under Programme (3), it is mentioned that the Department will take action to close public markets which are under-utilized. In this regard, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. of the public markets closed in the past 3 years, their locations, and current use of the sites;
2. of the public markets that will be closed this year, their utilization rates, numbers of market stalls affected and planned use of sites.

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

1. The Food and Environmental Hygiene 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.

With 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 low patronage and high vacancy rates. Closing such markets may release precious land resources for more gainful uses to better serve the community. When considering whether a market is to be closed, FEHD will take into account a host of factors, including the vacancy rate of the market, prospects for improvement, availability of alternative fresh provision outlets in the vicinity, the cost-effectiveness that may be brought by the upgrading works and the views of the relevant District Councils, etc. When drawing up closure plans for markets, FEHD will consult the District Councils and affected market tenants.

In the 3 financial years from 2017-18 to 2019-20, FEHD closed 4 markets with consistently high vacancy rates, namely Shau Kei Wan Market, Tsuen King Circuit

Market, Tai Yuen Street Cooked Food Market and Cheung Sha Wan Cooked Food Market.

After the closure of the 4 markets, the vacated buildings have been handled according to established procedures. Based on the circumstances, FEHD is requesting the relevant government departments including the Government Property Agency, Planning Department or Lands Department, to seek views from other government departments to formulate proposals for putting the premises to gainful long-term uses.

2. FEHD plans to close Tui Min Hoi Market in 2020-21. As at 31 December 2019, there were 19 stalls let out in the market, and the occupancy rate was about 56%. FEHD will continue to review the usage and development potential of other markets, and tentatively plans to take forward the preparatory and consultation work for closure of another 4 markets. Views from other government departments have been sought in accordance with established procedures to formulate proposals for putting the premises concerned to gainful long-term uses.

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