

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)144

(Question Serial No. 2446)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified
Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Some members of the public have complained about being greatly distressed by the pigeon nuisance in Wong Tai Sin and Wan Chai districts. Wanton feeding of pigeons is often found in Upper Wong Tai Sin Estate and at the tram stop outside the Craigengower Cricket Club in Wan Chai, leading to congregation of pigeons. No improvement in the hygiene conditions has been made although complaints have been lodged to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. With the current outbreak of influenza and novel coronavirus in the territory, the public are deeply concerned about the spread of viruses through accumulated droppings of birds. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) What were the manpower and financial resources allocated by the Department for mounting operations against the feeding of wild birds in the past 3 financial years? How many prosecutions were instituted?
- (2) From the estimated financial provision of \$5,903 million under Programme (2) in the coming financial year, what is the expenditure allocated for tackling the above issue? Has the Department assessed whether the current manpower and financial provision for tackling the pigeon feeding and environmental hygiene issues is adequate or not?
- (3) Given that there is a large number of hygiene blackspots of pigeon congregation across the territory and some of which are on private land, will a dedicated section be set up or inter-departmental meetings be held to discuss the related hygiene issues and co-ordinate efforts to tackle the situation? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

- (1) & (2) Under the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation (Cap. 132 BK), any person depositing litter on or in any street or public place, including dirtying any public place while feeding wild birds, will be prosecuted. The offender is liable to a maximum penalty of \$25,000 fine and 6 months'

imprisonment. The Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570) empowers enforcement officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), with a penalty currently set at \$1,500, for the offence.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department issued 181, 345 and 278 FPNs against persons dirtying public places while feeding wild birds each year from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (as at 29 February) respectively. As staff responsible for the cleansing and enforcement work are also tasked with other duties, the Department does not have statistics on the manpower and expenditure for the work related to wild bird feeding.

The Department has put in place a series of enhanced measures to prevent environmental hygiene nuisances caused by the congregation of wild birds. These include stepping up inspection, cleansing and disinfection with diluted bleach solution in public places where wild birds congregate; reminding the public not to feed wild birds through distribution of leaflets and erection of warning signs at target locations; and taking stringent enforcement actions against bird-feeders who dirty public places while feeding wild birds. Internet protocol cameras are also installed and dedicated enforcement teams deployed to step up enforcement actions against public cleanliness offences.

- (3) Owners (such as incorporated owners) and property management agencies of private areas may remind the persons concerned to keep the areas clean and not to feed wild birds. They should also perform their obligations and exercise their powers under the deed of mutual covenant. The Department is pleased to provide environmental hygiene education and advice for the owners accordingly.

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