

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)105

(Question Serial No. 3164)

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 (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

It is stated under the Programme that the Department will take forward proposals to streamline the food licensing regime. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- A) Can the Government achieve savings by streamlining the food licensing regime?
- B) After the rollout of the streamlined licensing regime, when will a review of its effectiveness be conducted? Under what circumstances will the new regime be applied to other food business licences?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 69)

Reply:

- A) On 1 March 2023, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department introduced a Professional Certification System (PCS), which adopts an approach of “licence first, inspection later” for the issue of full licences, for light refreshment restaurants and food factories on a pilot basis to streamline application procedures and shorten the processing time. Licence applicants are free to choose between the current system and the PCS. Under the PCS, the Department accepts the Certificate of Compliance and final layout plans issued by an authorised person or a registered structural engineer as certification for compliance with the health requirements. If an applicant has met the licensing requirements imposed by other relevant government departments and submitted the aforementioned certificate, the Department will issue the full licence first and then deploy its staff to conduct on-site audit checks. This is different from the current system, under which a full licence will only be issued upon completion of the final on-site check by the Department. The PCS provides a convenient option for licence applicants. As for whether or not it can reduce the workload or expenditure of the Department, it remains to be evaluated after it has run for a period of time.
- B) With sufficient case experience accumulated, the Department will review the effectiveness of the enhancement measure. The timing of the review depends on the

proportion of licence applicants opting for the PCS. Subject to the smooth implementation of the PCS and support from the trade, the Department will consider extending the new measure to other food business licences.

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