

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 3166)

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 (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

It is mentioned under the Programme that the Department will take action to close public markets which are under-utilised. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- A) the number of under-utilised public markets that the Government plans to close in the next 10 years; and
- B) the principles governing the use of existing spaces upon the closure of these under-utilised public markets.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 71)

Reply:

- A) With demographic changes, new development/redevelopment projects and competition from other fresh provision outlets, the appeal of some long-established public markets/cooked food markets (CFMs) has been diminishing over time with low patronage and high vacancy rates. With a view to optimising land use, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has been closely monitoring the utilisation of existing markets/CFMs and considering closing or consolidating under-utilised markets/CFMs, so that the vacated sites could be provided to other departments for better development, thereby benefitting the public. Various factors will be taken into consideration, including the vacancy rate, room for improvement, availability of fresh provision outlets in the vicinity, possible cost-effectiveness of upgrading works and the views of the local community, etc.

At present, we plan to close Kwun Tong Ferry Concourse CFM in 2023-24. The site will be handed over to the Energizing Kowloon East Office of the Development Bureau for planning, so as to tie in with the long-term development plan of the Kwun Tong Action Area.

Besides, FEHD has also commenced the preparatory and consultation work for the closure of 4 markets/CFMs as set out below.

- (1) In September 2021, we consulted the relevant committee of Central and Western District Council on the consolidation of Centre Street Market and Sai Ying Pun Market so as to vacate Centre Street Market for the Health Bureau to set up medical and healthcare-related facilities. The actual date of closure is to be confirmed;
 - (2) In October 2021, the Government Property Agency (GPA) consulted the relevant committee of Sha Tin District Council on the initial user mix of the proposed joint-user complex at Shan Mei Street in Fo Tan. Fo Tan (East) CFM and Fo Tan (West) CFM will both be closed and the sites will be vacated to make way for the afore-mentioned development project. The actual date of closure is to be confirmed; and
 - (3) It was announced in the 2023-24 Budget that the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau is examining the conversion of some under-utilised floors of Kwun Chung Municipal Services Building into an urban sports centre. FEHD will provide full support and maintain communication with the relevant stakeholders (including tenants in Kwun Chung Market) so as to work out the appropriate arrangements regarding the closure of Kwun Chung Market.
- B) When planning for the closure or consolidation of a market, if the premises or floors are surplus to FEHD's operational needs, views of other relevant departments (including the GPA, the Planning Department and the Lands Department) will be sought in accordance with the established procedures of the Government to formulate proposals for putting the premises or site to gainful long-term uses.

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