

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 2427)

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:

1. What is the number of rank and file staff responsible for the raids by Hawker Control Teams? What is their total amount of salary?
2. It is stated by the Department that it will provide new public market facilities at suitable locations. However, no public market has been constructed in Ma On Shan which has a population of over 200 000 at present. Will the Department allocate additional funding to build a public market in Ma On Shan district? If yes, please provide the estimated expenditure and timetable. If no, what is/are the reason(s)?
3. The Government announced in 2018 that \$2 billion would be earmarked for launching a 10-year Market Modernisation Programme (MMP). How many public markets are there in the territory? How many MMP projects have been completed so far? How much funding is left and how many MMP projects will be followed up by the remaining funding?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

1. One of the duties of the Hawker Control Officer (HCO) grade is to take law enforcement actions (including raids) against unlicensed hawkers, and the officers responsible for which are required to perform other duties as well. There is no rank and file staff in the HCO grade. As at 1 April 2023, the staffing establishment of the grade is 2 291, and the estimated manpower expenditure in 2023-24 is about \$835 million.
2. Providing a public market requires the use of scarce land resources and entails public financial commitment, both capital and recurrent. When considering whether to provide a new public market, the Government has to duly assess the need and cost-effectiveness to ensure proper use of public resources. Relevant factors to be taken into account include demographic mix, community needs, provision of market facilities and the number of fresh provision retail outlets in the vicinity.

Public markets must be in compliance with the relevant hygiene and safety requirements concerning building structures and layouts, electrical installations, water supply system, drainage system, sewage system, ventilation facilities, lighting system, fire fighting system, refuse handling facilities, loading and unloading areas, etc. The difficulty in identifying locations for the provision of public markets in developed areas cannot be underestimated.

According to the information as at early March 2023, there are 7 wet markets managed by different contractors, over 20 supermarkets and over 90 fresh provision outlets in Ma On Shan District, providing fresh provision and daily necessities for the local residents. Currently, we have no plan to build a public market in Ma On Shan.

3. At present, there are 97 public markets under the Department, including 74 public markets mainly offering wet and dry goods and 23 standalone cooked food markets.

We are pressing ahead with 6 overhaul or redevelopment projects under the Market Modernisation Programme (MMP). The pioneering project is the overhaul of Aberdeen Market. The works officially commenced in November 2021 and will be substantially completed in the first quarter of 2023. The market will re-open afterwards.

The Government will also proceed with the overhaul of Lai Wan Market. The market was closed in February 2023 for overhaul works and is expected to re-open before the Lunar New Year in 2024 at the earliest.

In addition, the preparatory and consultation works for 4 proposed overhaul or redevelopment projects in Yeung Uk Road Market, Ngau Tau Kok Market, Kowloon City Market and North Kwai Chung Market are underway. Upon deciding on the scope of works, the Department will conduct technical feasibility studies with the relevant departments. The works timetable and project cost will be confirmed upon completion of the technical feasibility studies and assessment as well as the detailed design.

The MMP also includes minor refurbishment or improvement works to upgrade market facilities as soon as possible. Out of the 16 markets currently covered, the works in 14 markets (including Ngau Tau Kok Market, Yeung Uk Road Market, Fa Yuen Street Market, Quarry Bay Market, Shui Wo Street Market, Tsuen Wan Market, Mong Kok Cooked Food Market, Ngau Chi Wan Market, Shek Tong Tsui Market, Yan Oi Market, Sai Kung Market, Po On Road Market, Wong Nai Chung Market and Smithfield Market) have been completed. For the remaining 2 markets (Luen Wo Hui Market and Nam Long Shan Road Cooked Food Market), the works or relevant preparatory works are underway, with completion expected in 2023 and in phases in 2024 respectively.

Up to the 2022-23 financial year, the expenditure on projects under the MMP is around \$225 million. This amount does not include the project costs of the 4 afore-mentioned overhaul or redevelopment projects of which the scope of works is pending confirmation.

We will continue to take follow-up actions in a proactive manner and identify more suitable markets for inclusion in the MMP, with a view to improving the operating environment of markets.

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