

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-EEB(F)002

(Question Serial No. SV022)

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:

Follow-up question to Reply Serial No. EEB(F)070:

In 2023, the median time taken for processing an application from restaurant licensees for outside seating accommodation was 23 months. Given that the majority of the 98 applications were withdrawn or abandoned, why did it take the Government 23 months to process the applications?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen

Reply:

Upon receipt of applications for outside seating accommodation (OSA), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will normally consult the Lands Department, the Buildings Department, the Fire Services Department, the Planning Department, the District Offices (DOs) under the Home Affairs Department and the Transport Department, etc. to ensure that the applications are in compliance with the requirements in relation to land use, building safety, fire safety, planning, transportation and hygiene, etc. DOs will conduct local consultations in the respective districts.

The processing time for an application for setting up OSA is contingent upon a number of factors, including whether the applicant can comply promptly with the licensing requirements (e.g. adequate sanitary and ablution facilities are provided for use by the customers of the premises and the OSA), whether the application involves a complicated land issue, and whether the applicant can settle promptly the objections raised by the relevant departments and those collected by DOs during local consultations (if any) (e.g. suggestions for noise mitigation measures are put forward). Therefore, the processing time varies from case to case and the applicant may choose to withdraw or abandon his/her application in the course of application out of various considerations.

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