

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)094

(Question Serial No. 1175)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

It is mentioned in the Programme that the estimated financial provision for market management and hawker control in 2025-26 is \$2,553.9 million, an increase of 2.2% (i.e. \$55.9 million) over the actual expenditure of \$2,498 million in 2024-25. Comparing the estimated numbers in 2025 with the actual numbers in 2024, the number of fixed pitch hawkers decreases by 98, the number of itinerant hawkers decreases by 33, the number of raids by Hawker Control Teams decreases by 45, and the number of joint operations with other departments decreases by 54. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1). Please set out the new plant and equipment procured under the Capital Account of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the past 2 years.
- 2). Please set out the specific number of the Department's staff involved in market management and hawker control, as well as the salary and welfare expenditure involved in the past 3 years.
- 3). In view of the prevalence of AI nowadays, will the Government look into replacing manual labour with AI systems for some of its work? If yes, what is the estimated amount of expenditure to be saved? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

- 1). In the past 2 years, the expenditure incurred by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in procuring Body Worn Video Cameras, including the associated supporting devices such as computer operating system, for Hawker Control Officers was around \$12.1 million.
- 2). The manpower allocated by the Department to the daily management of public markets and hawker control, as well as the overall expenditure involved, in the past 3 years are as follows:

Financial year	Market management		Hawker control	
	Manpower (Number of staff)	Overall expenditure ^{Note 1} (\$ million)	Manpower (Number of staff)	Overall expenditure ^{Note 1} (\$ million)
2022-23	233	1,079.8	2 413	1,223.2
2023-24	239	1,091.2	2 360	1,261.0
2024-25	251	1,136.3 (Revised estimate)	2 441	1,361.7 (Revised estimate)

Note 1: Overall expenditure includes expenditures on salary and benefits.

- 3). The Department is committed to leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance the efficiency of its work. For instance, Internet Protocol cameras have been widely installed at illegal refuse deposit blackspots, and AI is used to assist in analysing the footage and detecting offences to enhance the efficiency of law enforcement. Since 2024, the Department has fully adopted thermal imaging cameras with AI technology to analyse the footage to detect rodent activity. This has significantly enhanced the sensitivity and precision of the Rodent Activity Survey, thereby facilitating the Department's planning of targeted anti-rodent operations. It will keep abreast of technological advances and actively explore the feasibility of applying AI in market management and hawker control work.

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