

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)116

(Question Serial No. 3198)

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 (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

During 2025-26, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will take action to close public markets which are under-utilised. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) How many public markets have been classified as under-utilised? How does the Government measure their utilisation rate? What are the relevant criteria?
- (b) What are the estimated staff establishment earmarked for the afore-mentioned action and the specific expenditure involved?
- (c) How many public markets were closed in each of the past 5 years? Please also provide the relevant data and an analysis of the reasons for closure.
- (d) How will the Government deal with the relevant facilities and land resources after the closure of public markets which are under-utilised? What are the measures to help the affected tenants and members of the public cope with the changes?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

- (a),(c)&(d) 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 sites could be vacated for better development by other departments, 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. When planning for the closure or consolidation of a market, FEHD, in accordance with the established procedures of the Government, will seek views from the relevant departments, including the Planning Department and the Lands Department, to formulate

proposals for putting the relevant premises or sites to gainful long-term uses. In the past 5 years, FEHD has closed 3 markets/CFMs with consistently high vacancy rates. The relevant information is in **Annex**.

Regarding the affected tenants, according to the provisions of existing tenancy agreements of market stalls, either party may terminate the tenancy without making any compensation by giving to the other party a written notice of not less than 1 month. Nevertheless, considering that tenants moving out of markets permanently can facilitate the smooth closure of markets and vacate the premises for suitable development plans, which meets the overall interest of the community, we will consider making special concessionary arrangements.

- (b) The Market Development Division (MDD) of FEHD is responsible for the consolidation/closure of markets. As the MDD is also responsible for other duties relating to public market development (e.g. new public market development projects, the Market Modernisation Programme and enhancement of market management, etc.), we do not keep a separate breakdown of the manpower and expenditure involved in the consolidation/closure of markets. As at 31 March 2025, the staff establishment of the MDD of FEHD includes 26 civil servants and 10 non-civil service/post-retirement service contract staff. The estimated expenditure of the MDD of FEHD in 2025-26 is about \$33.64 million.

Public markets/CFMs closed in the past 5 years

| | Name of market | Date of closure | Use of vacated site |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1. | Tui Min Hoi Market | January 2021 | The site vacated following the closure of the market has been handed over to the Social Welfare Department for the provision of elderly care services. |
| 2. | Choi Hung Road Market | March 2022 | The Government is looking into developing a new integrated government complex under the “single site, multiple use” principle at the site of Choi Hung Road Sports Centre and the former Choi Hung Road Market. |
| 3. | Kwun Tong Ferry Concourse CFM | July 2023 | The site vacated following the closure of the CFM has been rezoned to “Open Space” and will be integrated with Kwun Tong Promenade to further enhance the vibrancy and attractiveness of the waterfront area. |

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