

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 0047)

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:

It is mentioned in Programme (3) that markets which are under-utilised will be closed. Please advise this Committee of the following:

1. What indicators does the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department use to assess the effectiveness of existing markets? What are the criteria for closing a market? If there are such indicators, what are the criteria of the indicators? If no, what are the reasons?
2. How many old markets for which overhaul or renovation assessments have been carried out by the Department so far? If assessments have been carried out, what are the data and assessment results?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 62)

Reply:

1. 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 has been closely monitoring the utilisation of existing markets/CFMs and considering consolidating or closing 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.
2. To improve the operating environment of existing public markets, thereby facilitating tenants' business operation and providing patrons with a more pleasant shopping environment, the Government has earmarked \$2 billion for the implementation of the Market Modernisation Programme, which includes overhaul or redevelopment of markets, stall enhancement projects, as well as minor refurbishment or improvement works.

Market overhaul or redevelopment projects generally involve re-configuration of the overall layout of a market, upgrading of building service installations and other improvement works. Aberdeen Market and Lai Wan Market officially re-opened in May 2023 and March 2024 respectively upon completion of the overhaul works. They have been operating smoothly since re-opening. The daily average patronage of Aberdeen Market after resumption of operation is about 12 000, an increase of about 17% from that before the overhaul works. The patronage of Lai Wan Market after resumption of operation has also remained at an average of over 8 000 per day, an increase of over 13% from that before the overhaul works.

Stall enhancement projects include repair and beautification works or maintenance works based on actual needs and circumstances. The project in Queen Street CFM was launched on a pilot basis. The works commenced in February 2024 and the CFM resumed full operation in September 2024. At present, the average daily footfall of the CFM is about 1 600, an increase of about 20% from that before the works. Stall tenants indicated that the enhancement works have improved the operating environment. Many members of the public have also expressed that the enhanced CFM offers a contemporary feel and a clean and comfortable dining environment. The Department will continue to identify other suitable markets for stall enhancement works.

As for minor refurbishment or improvement works, the Department has taken forward the relevant works in 16 markets. The works in 15 markets have been completed, while the remaining works in Nam Long Shan Road CFM are expected to be completed in 2025.

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