

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)152**

**(Question Serial No. 3446)**

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:

The work of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in Programme (3) includes managing licensed hawker pitches, hawker permitted places and hawker bazaars. Will the Government review the existing hawker policy to promote the transformation and upgrade of hawker culture in an innovative and sustainable manner? For examples, allocating suitable vacant government sites or buildings, or even deploying resources to revitalise markets with a high vacancy rate, so as to create shopping aisles selling products with Hong Kong's local characteristics and allow hawkers to move in on a rent-free basis. If yes, what are the details of the review? What are the staff establishment and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 535)

Reply:

Society has different views and expectations regarding hawkers and their hawking activities. The Government is committed to balancing the needs and views of various parties so that licensed hawkers can operate according to market demand while ensuring food safety, environmental hygiene and public safety, and avoiding nuisance to local residents. To balance the needs and expectations of various parties, the Government regulates hawking activities through a licensing regime so as to manage risks in environmental hygiene and fire safety, etc. The Government has also been re-allocating vacant fixed hawker pitches so that licensed itinerant hawkers may choose to operate at more suitable locations, such as on-street fixed hawker pitches or hawker bazaars, while giving eligible members of the public an opportunity to enter the hawker trade.

In 2019 and 2022, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department launched the Re-allocation of Fixed Hawker Pitches and Issue of New Licences. Under the scheme, 523 new fixed pitch hawker licences with an operation period of 7 years were issued. As at February 2026, there were about 290 vacant fixed hawker pitches in the territory. The Department will actively consider making them available for application by eligible persons at a suitable time.

The Government welcomes members of the public, especially young people, to make use of market stalls or licensed hawker pitches to start their business. The Department has been closely monitoring the operation of hawker bazaars and public markets, and collaborating with the relevant stakeholders to enhance and improve the overall business environment and atmosphere of hawker bazaars and public markets by stepping up publicity, organising workshops during festivals, holding seminars, encouraging and assisting fixed pitch hawkers to promote themselves through social platforms, etc. The Department has been maintaining close communication with the stakeholders (including trade associations, market stall tenants, hawker licensees and local representatives) to explore measures to better utilise hawker pitches as well as market stalls and space, so as to cater for the needs of the public and operators.

For examples, the Department is collaborating with non-profit organisations to allow young people to operate the vacant stalls at Yue Man Hawker Bazaar in Kwun Tong to sell handicrafts, household wares and groceries, etc. The Department is also planning to launch a similar scheme in Aberdeen Market to allow young people to acquire entrepreneurial experience at a lower cost, while injecting vitality into the market, diversifying the goods sold and enhancing the business environment of the market. The Department is currently identifying suitable partners and will take into account the implementation of the scheme in Aberdeen Market to explore ways to make better use of vacant stalls in public markets.

Implementing hawker policies and carrying out the above work are part of the duties of the Hawker and Market Section of the Department. It does not keep a breakdown of the manpower and expenditure involved in each of the duties.

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