

For information

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**General Improvement to the Fa Yuen Street Market
and Cooked Food Centre**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the revised scope of works in respect of the general improvement to the Fa Yuen Street Market (the Market) and Cooked Food Centre (CFC).

Background and Justification

2. The Market and CFC built by the former Urban Council in 1988 has a total of 166 market stalls and 22 cooked food stalls respectively. With the passage of time, it has fallen short of the current standards in respect of fire services installation and provision of barrier-free access. While regular and scheduled maintenance works have been conducted over the years, the existing internal finishes and building services installations now need to be upgraded after nearly 20 years of wear and tear.

3. The Market and CFC was one of the 19 markets / CFCs earmarked by the former Municipal Councils for retro-fitting of air-conditioning system and/or general improvement works. Whilst the Government is responsible for the project costs for installing the air-conditioning system, the recurrent cost such as electricity charges are borne by the stall lessees. The support of the affected stall lessees is therefore essential to the smooth implementation of the air-conditioning retro-fitting works. To ensure that the retro-fitting works have the support of the vast majority of the affected stall lessees, support from 85% or more of the stall lessees for the retro-fitting works and payment of the recurrent air-conditioning charges is necessary before the works are carried out.

4. In 2002, a survey was conducted among the stall lessees of the Market and CFC on the proposed air-conditioning retro-fitting works. At that time, 86% of the lessees supported the project. On this basis, a submission was made to Legislative Council's Public Works

Subcommittee (PWSC) in May 2003 to recommend proceeding with the air-conditioning retro-fitting and other general improvement works for the Market and CFC. Divergent views were expressed by the PWSC. Whilst some Members supported the proposal, others expressed strong reservations about using substantial public money to provide air-conditioning for the CFC and criticised that it might be unfair to restaurants and fast food shops operating in the neighbourhood of the CFC. As a result, the matter was re-considered / discussed at different forums, including the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene, the Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC), and with the stall lessees concerned. Again, divergent views were expressed by different parties on the proposed air-conditioning retro-fitting works.

5. Accordingly, in 2005 and 2006, another round of survey was conducted among the stall lessees concerned. In this survey, tenants' support for air-conditioning retro-fitting works dropped significantly – from 86% in 2002 to 40% in 2005 in respect of market tenants and from 100% in 2002 to 71% in 2006 in respect of CFC tenants.

6. In November 2006, we presented the above results to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committee of the YTMDC which raised no objection to our proposal to proceed with general improvement works only for both the Market and CFC. We further consulted the stall lessees on the revised scope of improvement works (which include only the general improvement works but not the air-conditioning retro-fitting works) at a meeting of the Market Management Consultative Committee (MMCC) in September 2007. They had no objection to the revised scope of works.

Revised Scope of Works

7. In view of the latest developments, we propose to drop the air-conditioning retro-fitting works for both the Market and CFC but implement other market improvement works which include –

General Improvement to the Market and CFC

- (a) upgrading of fire service installations;
- (b) provision of barrier-free access which is in line with current statutory requirements;

- (c) refurbishment works including replacement of internal finishes in common areas, lime-wash of ceiling and improvement of lighting, mechanical ventilation system, drainage system and signage;
- (d) refurbishment of toilets;

Improvement Works to the CFC

- (e) provision of a new staircase from 2/F to 3/F in enhancing the accessibility to the CFC via the market;
- (f) replacement of the kitchen exhaust system;
- (g) demolition of vacant stalls to improve natural ventilation and to release space for communal seating area;
- (h) provision of a new store room; and

Improvement Works to the Market

- (i) conversion of vacant poultry stalls into store rooms.

8. The capital cost for the improvement works is estimated to be around \$50 million (in Money-of-the-Day prices). We plan to seek the funding approval of the PWSC and the Finance Committee in early 2008. Subject to funding approval by the Finance Committee, the project will commence in mid-2008 for completion by the end of 2009.

Arrangements during works stage

9. As with other market improvement exercises, we shall arrange temporary closure of the Market by zones so as to minimise disruption to the normal operation of the Market and inconvenience caused to the public. The affected stall lessees will have to suspend business for a few days. However, for food safety consideration, it is necessary to close the whole CFC by about a month for the improvement works. We have consulted the stall lessees and the latter have expressed their preference for closing the CFC in the summer of 2009 for the works to take place. Rental waiver / reduction for the affected stall lessees will be considered in accordance with Government's general guidelines for granting rental concession to stall lessees affected by market improvement works. As and when the details of the works programme and designs are available, we will further brief the MMCC.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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