

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Closure of Kimberley Street Market

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the arrangements pertaining to the closure of Kimberley Street Market (KSM).

Background

2. KSM is located on the ground floor (G/F) and in the basement (B/M) of Kimberley Hotel, Kimberley Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. It was constructed at the developer's own cost, handed over to the Government on completion, and officially taken over by the then Urban Council (UC) in October 1992.

3. With 13 stalls on G/F and eight stalls in B/M, KSM was originally planned to be operated in the form of a supermarket selling fresh food and general provisions. The then UC let out all stalls on G/F and in B/M to two subsidiary companies of the hotel separately through open tender for a period of three years commencing January 1994 and renewed the tenancy agreements with the two tenants upon expiry.

4. Since the business of KSM had not been satisfactory, the tenants obtained consent from the then UC in 1996 to convert the 13 stalls on G/F into ten cooked food stalls and one newspaper stall (later converted into a flower stall) at the tenant's own cost. The eight stalls in B/M remained to be operated as shops and in accordance with the original tenancy conditions with permission to sell general provisions including liquor, soft drinks, confectionery, cakes, canned food, frozen processed meat, stationery and household sundries. Due to its inconspicuous location, B/M lacked the appeal of a public market and its patronage was low.

5. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") took over the management of KSM in 2000 and continued the arrangement of the former UC by renewing the tenancy agreements with the two original tenants. The last tenancy agreements expired on 17 April 2009.

6. In Report No. 51 of the Director of Audit (Audit Report), it was considered necessary to critically assess the need for the continued operation of KSM and, if there was no such need, FEHD should explore in consultation with relevant departments the alternative gainful use of the market site.

Assessment of Need

7. FEHD has completed the assessment of the need for the continued operation of KSM.

8. KSM was originally built to provide public market facilities to residents of Tsim Sha Tsui East; however, as Tsim Sha Tsui has gradually developed into a commercial and tourist centre, most of its residential areas have been replaced with shops and offices. Meanwhile, as there are quite a number of supermarkets and fresh provision shops in the vicinity, in addition to two FEHD markets in the district, residents' demand for fresh food supply from KSM is low. Besides, as there are already hundreds of restaurants and snack shops offering a large variety of choices for people living or working in the district, the cooked food centre on the G/F is not essential.

Consultation with the District Council

9. Based on the above assessment, FEHD consulted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committee ("FEHC") of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council on 26 March 2009. FEHC unanimously agreed that the whole KSM should be closed as soon as possible. As for the use of the market site after its closure, most FEHC members suggested to convert it for community use, such as promotion of cultural activities and provision of study rooms, libraries and activity rooms, etc.

Implementation of the Proposal to Close KSM

10. The two tenants concerned agreed not to renew the tenancy agreements upon their expiry on 17 April 2009. They have delivered up possession of all stalls to FEHD and the market has ceased operation. The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene will, by order published in the Gazette, amend the Tenth Schedule of the Public Health and Municipal

Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) (“the Ordinance”) by deleting KSM from the list of public markets in accordance with Section 79(5) of the Ordinance.

11. Moreover, the Government Property Agency will explore the use of the site after the closure of the market according to established procedures.

12. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Food and Health Bureau

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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