

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Extension of the Voluntary Surrender Scheme
for Itinerant Hawker Licences**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the extension of the voluntary surrender scheme for itinerant hawker licences (IHLs) by one year to 31 December 2009.

Background

2. The voluntary surrender scheme for IHLs was introduced in 2002 and valid for five years from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2007. It was later extended by one year to 31 December 2008. Under the scheme, an IHL holder who voluntarily surrenders his licence may choose any one of the following options –

- (a) to select a vacant fixed pitch and become a fixed pitch licensed hawker;
- (b) to select a vacant stall in public markets and enjoy certain concessionary rental arrangements; or
- (c) to receive an ex gratia payment (EGP) of \$30,000.

3. Up to 30 September 2008, a total of 401 IHL holders surrendered their licences under the scheme. 320 of them opted for EGP, 58 selected vacant fixed pitches and 23 selected vacant market stalls. The remaining 559 IHL holders continued operation.

Considerations

4. The Food and Health Bureau and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department are conducting a review on hawker licensing policy. We briefed the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the preliminary findings of the review in June 2008, and received Members' support. We are now consulting stakeholders, including hawkers associations

and District Councils, and expect to complete the review in the first quarter of 2009.

5. As the on-going review may have implications to the future operation of IHLs, and in view of the request of some hawker associations to extend the validity of the voluntary surrender scheme, we have decided to extend the voluntary surrender scheme by one year to 31 December 2009.

Advice Sought

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

Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
December 2008