
立法會秘書處

Legislative Council Secretariat

新聞稿 Press Release

A letter from the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee
to the Chief Secretary for Administration

The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC"), Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, wrote to the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Hon Henry TANG Ying-yen, today (8 July) to convey the concern of PAC about the way the Administration had handled its recommendations made on the subject of "Management of public markets" in PAC Report No. 51. The Report was published in February 2009.

The Chairman of PAC stated in his letter that at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene held on 2 June 2009, the Under Secretary for Food and Health discussed with the Panel members issues relating to the signing of new tenancy agreement between the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") and public market stall tenants, as well as the amendments to the tenancy agreement, because at that time the new tenancy agreement was objected to by many market stall tenants. To PAC's dismay, the Under Secretary, in his reply to Panel members' questions, seemed to have made PAC accountable for FEHD's introduction of the new tenancy agreement. The Under Secretary, in referring to the PAC recommendations, also failed to refer to the context in which those recommendations were made and whether and how the implementation of the amendments by way of the new tenancy agreement had taken into account that context.

The Chairman of PAC pointed out that the way the Food and Health Bureau and FEHD had handled the matter gave PAC the impression that they had been deliberately selective in using the conclusions and recommendations ("C&Rs") of PAC in that only those that aligned with their proposed courses of action were focused on.

The Chairman of PAC also stressed in his letter that whilst PAC would monitor the Administration's progress in implementing PAC's recommendations, it was the Administration which was responsible for how those measures should be implemented and ensuring their successful implementation.

The Chairman of PAC urged the Chief Secretary for Administration to inform all bureaux and departments of PAC's concern and advise them that when following up PAC's C&Rs, they should consider the C&Rs as a whole and in context in formulating, and in implementing, their courses of action.

In the C&Rs on "Management of public markets" made in PAC Report No. 51, PAC set out clearly its overall stance on this matter, i.e. PAC "considers that: (a) in addition to land and building costs, public markets also cost the Government some \$500 million a year to operate. They must therefore serve the primary purpose of their existence, i.e. providing active market services to the community, otherwise they would not justify the high building and operation costs; and (b) the Administration's policy on the provision of public markets should be conducive to ensuring that the public markets can give full play to their functions to effectively serve the needs of the community". In this connection, PAC urged the Administration to "complete the market surveys (to gauge the views of market patrons and stall tenants so as to assess the viability and value of public markets in the community) by June 2009 and, having regard to the result of the surveys, formulate clear policy on the provision of public markets, including the positioning, functions and appropriate level of Government's subsidisation of the operation of public markets".

On market stall rentals and charges, PAC expressed serious concern that "the FHB and the FEHD have not devised a suitable rental adjustment mechanism to deal with stall tenancy renewal cases after 30 June 2009 (the expiry date of the rental freeze period)".

Ends/Wednesday, July 8, 2009

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