

"Report of the Subcommittee on Hawker Policy"

Motion Debate

Progress Report

The motion on "Report of the Subcommittee on Hawker Policy" moved by Hon Steven Ho Chun-yin was passed at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 18 November 2015. At the meeting, the Secretary for Food and Health responded to the questions on major issues in the report and those raised by Members. This report briefs Members on the Government's follow-up work.

Latest Progress

2. The Government seeks to formulate a hawker policy which strikes an optimal balance between allowing licensed hawking business to thrive and meeting other legitimate concerns in addition to ensuring food safety, environmental hygiene and public safety. In future, we will continue to pursue our hawker policy under the eight principles, and implement the five proposals put forward at the Subcommittee meetings.

Hawker licensing

3. To reduce the risk of fire hazards, the Government has introduced a five-year Hawker Assistance Scheme to provide financial assistance to some 4 300 licensed hawkers operating in 43 fixed-pitch hawker areas throughout the territory for expediting relocation of stalls or in-situ stall reconstruction. We reported to the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the progress made in implementing the scheme at its meeting on 8 December 2015. As mentioned at the meeting, all hawker stalls that are located directly in front of staircase discharge points of adjacent buildings, or obstructing the operation of fire engines or other emergency vehicular access have been relocated. We are monitoring closely the implementation of in-situ stall reconstruction in fixed-pitch hawker areas. In the process, we will also endeavour to identify areas which could bring about enhancement to the hawking environment, including rationalising the overall layout of hawker areas where circumstances permit, and enhancing electrical safety of hawker permitted places. The

hawker areas undergoing the above-mentioned consolidation include Marble Road in North Point, Kam Wa Street in Shau Kei Wan, Jardine's Crescent in Causeway Bay, Man Wa Lane in Central and Western District, and Reclamation Street in Yau Ma Tei; while the hawker areas which have completed such consolidation include Gresson Street in Wanchai, Kweilin Street and Fuk Wa Street in Sham Shui Po, and Saigon Street in Yau Ma Tei.

4. On the question of whether we will issue new hawker licences to fill any vacant pitches in the relevant hawker areas, we will carefully consider the issue at a suitable time, taking into account the circumstances of individual hawker areas, including their fire safety and environmental hygiene situations, the business environment, the comments of relevant departments, as well as the views of the relevant District Councils (DCs) and local residents. As and when appropriate, we will consider how to handle the calls for giving priority to registered hawker assistants in issuing the licences.

Bottom-up bazaar proposal

5. So long as food safety and environmental hygiene would not be compromised, we keep an open mind towards district-led proposals on local bazaars and see merits for such proposals to be pursued through a bottom-up approach. If suitable sites are identified by any organisations for use as bazaars and support from the local community as well as relevant DCs has been obtained, the Government will render assistance as far as possible. With the support of the relevant DC, an organisation held a bazaar in Sham Shui Po District in the summer of 2015. As regards the proposals received earlier from four districts (namely North District, Tung Chung District, Tin Shui Wai District and Sham Shui Po District) to set up local bazaars, the Food and Health Bureau had written to the four DC Chairmen concerned in March 2016, seeking their assistance in putting the proposals before the DCs for discussion and follow-up.

6. With the support of Sham Shui Po DC, an organisation submitted an application for the requisite Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licence for organising a bazaar in Kiu Kiang Street, Sham Shui Po from June to October 2016. Having verified the compliance with all licensing conditions,

the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) issued the requisite licence. The first day of the bazaar was organized on 26 June.

7. Separately, the Islands DC has formed a Working Group on promotion of bazaar development. It has held two meetings since April 2016. We will keep in touch with the DC and District Officer concerned to follow up the proposals.

8. There are calls for the Government to prescribe a uniform mechanism for handling bazaar proposals across the territory. It remains our view that we should allow room for the gestation process to vary in tune with the unique circumstances in each district. Mandatory recourse to certain rigid procedures or a communication platform prescribed by the Government may not be conducive to making the most out of the district-led and bottom-up approach.

Fire safety measures of Cooked Food Markets

9. Having regard to the Director of Audit's recommendation on improving the fire safety measures of Cooked Food Markets (CFMs), FEHD has worked with relevant departments to actively carry out fire safety improvement works in the remaining Cooked Food Hawker Bazaars (CFHBs) in accordance with the actual situation. After the motion debate, emergency lighting and manual fire alarm systems have been installed in 15 CFMs (namely Sze Shan Street CFM, Tung Yuen Street CFM, Chai Wan Kok CFM, Cheung Tat Road CFM, Ka Ting CFM, Kwai Shun Street CFM, Tai Yuen Street CFM, Reclamation Street CFHB, Lai Yip Street CFHB, Luen Yan Street CFHB, Lam Tei Market cum Hawker Bazaar, Fo Tan CFM (East), Fo Tan CFM (West), Mui Wo CFM and Stanley Market Open Space Hawker Bazaar) where the facilities concerned were not previously in place. Regarding those fire safety measures which are yet to be installed due to technical considerations, FEHD will continue to work with the relevant departments to sort out their feasibility.

Food and Health Bureau

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