

**For information
on 24 December 2009**

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 2010.

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. Subsequently, the Administration conducted a review on hawker licensing policy. In view of the possible implications of the review on the future operation of IHLs, the validity period of the scheme has been extended twice to 31 December 2009. 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. At its meeting on 14 April this year, the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene supported the Administration's proposed policy direction on hawker licensing, including issuing new Itinerant Hawker (Frozen Confectionery) Licences (i.e. "small ice cream vendor" licences). As all holders of such licences at the time indicated that they would not surrender their licenses under the scheme, the expiry date of the scheme for this type of licences was advanced to 31 May this year. As for other types of IHLs, the policy review concluded that the prevailing policy of not issuing those licences should be maintained and that the voluntary surrender scheme would expire on 31 December 2009 as scheduled.

4. As at 30 November 2009, a total of 436 IHL holders had voluntarily surrendered their licences under the scheme. Among them, 340 opted for EGP, 70 selected vacant fixed pitches and 26 selected vacant market stalls. The remaining 490 IHL holders (small ice cream vendors excluded) continued their operation.

Considerations

5. Recently, a number of hawker associations requested for an extension of the validity period of the voluntary surrender scheme, in order to allow more time for IHL holders to consider whether to surrender their licences and how to choose from the options available. Itinerant hawkers may need more time to make a decision that has a bearing on their livelihood, as they all come from the

grass-roots and some of them are elderly people. In view of this, we have decided to extend the voluntary surrender scheme by one year to 31 December 2010¹.

Advice Sought

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

**Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
December 2009**

¹ Since the voluntary surrender scheme for “small ice cream vendor” licences already expired on 31 May this year, this extension of the validity period for voluntarily surrendering licences is not applicable to holders of such licences.