



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

Translation

22 February 2016

Miss Josephine SO
Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Fax: 2509 9055)

Dear Ms SO,

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (“Panel”)
Letter from Hon Helena WONG**

Thank you for your letter dated 21 January 2016, enclosing the letter from Hon Helena WONG dated 19 January this year to Hon Tommy CHEUNG, the Panel Chairman. In that letter, Hon WONG expressed her concern over the relocation arrangements of the Yen Chow Street Temporary Hawker Bazaar (cloth bazaar).

Commissioned in 1978, the cloth bazaar has 192 hawker stalls selling mainly fabrics. The Government has since 1981 earmarked the site occupied by the cloth bazaar for long-term residential development. In 2005, the change of land use of the cloth bazaar site was discussed at the Sham Shui Po District Council (SSPDC). Subsequently, the Food

and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) engaged the cloth hawkers to follow up the relocation arrangements. In June 2013, the Planning Department briefed SSPDC on the proposed housing development strategy in the district, which included the proposed use of the site at 373 Lai Chi Kok Road (i.e. the site currently occupied by the cloth bazaar) for building Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats.

FEHD has reached a common understanding with the licensed cloth hawkers of the cloth bazaar regarding the exit arrangements. Under the existing hawker policy, the exit plans formulated for the licensed cloth hawkers do not apply to the unlicensed operators in the cloth bazaar site. From the policy as well as legal points of view, there does not exist a cogent basis for adopting the same arrangements for both licensed and unlicensed operators, or else the integrity of the licensing regime cannot be upheld. However, having regard to the fact that the cloth bazaar has been in operation for many years, the age of the operators, the contributions that they have made to the clothing, tailoring and related industries of Hong Kong, as well as the historical reasons underlying the presence of unlicensed operations at the venue, the Government is willing to consider making special arrangement in this case and exercise discretion to formulate an exit plan for the eligible unlicensed cloth hawkers, on condition that, existing FEHD facilities close to the cloth bazaar could be put to more optimal use with the hawkers concerned relocated collectively thereto, thereby helping to preserve the original characteristics of the cloth bazaar as far as practicable whilst meeting, in a balanced manner, the needs of the district for other developments.

FEHD met with the unlicensed operators of the cloth bazaar on 18 January and 17 February 2016 respectively to listen to their views as well as to offer a proposal for their consideration. Under the proposal, the eligible unlicensed hawkers may stay in business by collectively relocating to the Tung Chau Street Temporary Market (TCS Market) which is not far from the cloth bazaar. We consider the relocation of the cloth market to the TCS Market a practical, feasible and win-win option that is of benefit to all parties concerned. It allows the licensed or eligible unlicensed cloth hawkers to continue with their business operations collectively in Sham Shui Po, which helps preserve the

economic characteristics of the district. Besides, upon relocation, the facilities of the cloth market will be enhanced with additional space for further development and the existing cloth bazaar site could also be released for HOS development, thus benefiting members of the public with housing needs.

At the meeting on 17 February 2016, cloth hawkers who attended the meeting expressed their requests to FEHD, and submitted their specific views on the relocation plans to the TCS Market. FEHD is now considering their views in detail, and will invite the unlicensed operators of the cloth bazaar to another meeting to continue the communication.

Hon Priscilla LEUNG and Hon Helena WONG have respectively raised written questions on the relevant matters on 3 February and 17 February 2016. The reply by the Secretary for Food and Health have explained in detail matters such as the background of the relocation plans, rationale for the arrangements of relocating to the TCS Market, progress of negotiating with cloth hawkers and the security and environmental hygiene issues around the TCS Market. Furthermore, FEHD and the cloth hawkers have already established a communication channel for exchanging views. We consider that the relevant matters should continue to be handled by FEHD through the established mechanism for communicating with the cloth hawkers.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

(Miss Diane Wong)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene