

**For information  
on 16 February 2016**

**Legislative Council Panel on Security**

**Hawker Management and Policy**

**Introduction**

This paper seeks to clarify that:

- (1) the riot in Mong Kok during the Lunar New Year was not caused by hawker management; and
- (2) there are mechanism and channel in place to handle proposals on setting up of open-air hawker bazaars and night markets.

**Riot Was Not Caused by Hawker Management**

2. The claims by some people that the riot in Mong Kok was caused by hawker management are untrue. We therefore consider it necessary to make clarifications. In fact, on 8 February, officers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") were handling illegal hawking activities at Mong Kok. Hawker control officers of FEHD were conducting general squad patrol in the section of Portland Street between Shantung Street and Nelson Street that evening. At that time, they did not issue any warning nor take any enforcement action against the hawkers selling cooked food illegally, let alone conducting raids. However, they were already surrounded, scolded and pushed around by over 50 persons, causing injury to a squad member. During that time, two carts carrying cooked food were also being pushed towards squad members. In view of the above clashes and violent acts, and the concerned cooked food stalls involving boiling oil and using flame cooking, as well as in the interest of the safety of the members of the squad and the large number of people at the scene, FEHD called for police assistance at about 9:40 p.m.

3. FEHD has all along been tolerant in handling illegal hawking activities. Should illegal hawking involving selling dry goods be found obstructing pedestrian passageways, verbal warning will be given and dispersal action will be taken in normal circumstances. However, because of food safety and environmental hygiene, if illegal hawking of cooked food or restricted food is found, FEHD staff will take enforcement action depending on the situation at the scene.

## **Mechanism to Handle Proposals on Setting Up Open-air Hawker Bazaars and Night Markets**

4. The Food and Health Bureau (“FHB”) has on various occasions and through different channels discussed with relevant parties the principles and suggestions on hawker policy. As early as in July 2013, the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (“FSEH Panel”) appointed a Subcommittee on Hawker Policy (“Subcommittee”) to review the hawker policy. A number of meetings were held. In March 2015, the FHB submitted concrete proposals to the Subcommittee, which included the proposal on “setting up district-led open-air hawker bazaars and night markets”. FHB keeps an open mind on relevant proposals, and believes that for the successful operation of such bazaars, the proposals should be district-led so that they can balance different views of the local community. We have to consider the operation of hawking business on the one hand, and address public concerns over environmental hygiene, food safety and obstruction to public passageways on the other. If suitable sites are identified and support from the relevant District Councils is obtained, provided that food safety and environmental hygiene are not compromised, we stand ready to facilitate liaison with relevant government departments as far as possible.

5. Subsequently, the Secretary for Food and Health (“SFH”) introduced the Government’s stance on the hawker policy on various occasions<sup>1</sup> and invited interested parties to identify suitable sites for setting up hawker bazaars/night markets in respective districts. In November 2015, FHB and the Legislative Council (LegCo) separately received proposals on local bazaars to be set up in the Yuen Long District, North District, Islands District and Sham Shui Po District. Since it happened to be the election period of the District Councils then, SFH indicated to LegCo that the proposals would be followed up with the new District Councils.

6. As regards open-air hawker bazaars held during the Lunar New Year, only one organisation in Sham Shui Po (out of the 18 districts) proposed to hold Chinese New Year celebratory activities in the Maple Street Playground, Sham Shui Po during the 2016 Lunar New Year.

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

### **Food and Health Bureau**

### **Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**

**February 2016**

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<sup>1</sup> Including a briefing session for Chairmen of all 18 District Councils in March 2015, reiteration of the Government’s stance at the Subcommittee meeting in May and during the motion debate on the Subcommittee Report at the LegCo meeting of 18 November.