

# LCQ11: Management of markets and hawker bazaars in the Kwun Tong district

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Ka-piu and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

Last year, the Government proposed to overhaul Ngau Tau Kok Market in the Kwun Tong district under the Market Modernisation Programme (Modernisation of Ngau Tau Kok Market). It is learnt that the stall tenants of the market are hawker licence holders who have been operating there for many years, and that most of the licensees are elderly. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as some stall tenants of Ngau Tau Kok Market have relayed that there is still no concrete timetable for the Modernisation of Ngau Tau Kok Market, whether the authorities (i) have formulated a construction schedule and target completion date for the project to increase its transparency, and (ii) will consider replacing the overhaul works under the project with the redevelopment of Ngau Tau Kok Market, re-planning the site and adding topside properties, so as to optimize land use; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the number of hawker licence holders among the existing stall tenants of Ngau Tau Kok Market, together with a breakdown of the number of years they have held the licence (i.e. (i) 0 to 10 years, (ii) 11 to 20 years, (iii) 21 to 30 years, (iv) 31 to 40 years, (v) 41 to 50 years and (vi) 51 years or above); whether the authorities will study enhancing the existing arrangements for the surrender of hawker licences, such as providing additional compensation to stall tenants based on the number of years they have held the hawker licence; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as it has been reported that the development and operation of Yue Man Hawker Bazaar, a hawker bazaar, are unsatisfactory, with many vacant stalls in the bazaar and the products sold being repetitive and lacking in uniqueness, and that commercial tenants are required to hold fixed-pitch hawker licences in order to operate there, hence being subject to more restrictions on their operations, whether the authorities will study removing red tape to enhance the feasibility of revitalizing Yue Man Hawker Bazaar; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is taking forward the overhaul project of Ngau Tau Kok Market under the Market Modernisation Programme. Since 2020, the FEHD has been maintaining communication with tenants and relevant stakeholders (including Legislative Council (LegCo) members, Kwun Tong District Council members and Market Management Consultative Committee), seeking their opinions on the preliminary plan of the overhaul project and the arrangements during the construction period, etc. They generally welcomed in-situ overhaul of Ngau Tau Kok Market, and suggested the provision of a short-term temporary market at a suitable location nearby to meet the residents' shopping needs during the overhaul works.

The FEHD consulted the Kwun Tong District Council in September 2023 on the proposed scope of works of the overhaul project of Ngau Tau Kok Market and the proposed sites for the provision of a short-term temporary market. After carefully considering relevant circumstances and views of various parties, it is considered that providing the short-term temporary market at the seven-a-side soccer pitch of Ngau Tau Kok Park is relatively more practicable. Currently, the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) is conducting preliminary technical assessments in respect of the overhaul project and the short-term temporary market, and will begin detailed feasibility studies later. The ArchSD will draw up the proposed works programme and target completion date upon completion of the detailed feasibility studies in the second half of this year.

(2) As at January 17, 2024, the number of let-out stalls in Ngau Tau Kok Market was 370. Stall tenants of Ngau Tau Kok Market do not hold hawker licences. The landlord-tenant relationship between the FEHD and stall tenant is governed by tenancy agreement. Under the terms of existing tenancies of public market stalls, the landlord (i.e. the FEHD) and tenants are not required to make any compensation to the other party for tenancy termination with a written notice of not less than one month. Nevertheless, considering that the co-operation of tenants can facilitate the smooth implementation of market development plans for achieving the objectives of promoting district development and benefitting the public, which meet the overall interest of the community, the FEHD will, in accordance with the established policy and the applicable concessionary arrangements, provide assistance to affected tenants.

(3) Yue Man Hawker Bazaar (YMHB) is a hawker bazaar managed by the FEHD, and all stall operators shall hold a fixed-pitch hawker licence. To make way for the Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project, licensed hawkers who had operated in Mut Wah Street, Hip Wo Street, and Kwun Tong district area in the past were relocated to YMHB. Stall traders at YMHB can choose to sell a wide variety of goods, including prepacked food and drinks, and/or various non-food dry goods such as clothing, haberdashery, household goods, pet products, small toys, information technology equipment and accessories, curios, souvenirs, crafts etc. In addition, stall traders can also apply to the FEHD

if they would like to sell other non-food dry goods.

At present, among the 135 stalls in YMHB, 23 stalls are vacant. The FEHD has been closely monitoring the operation of YMHB and collaborating with the Urban Renewal Authority and its promotional contractors to enhance and improve the overall operating environment and atmosphere of the bazaar, such as organising workshops during festive seasons and inviting performing artists to perform so as to attract patronage; talks and workshops were also organised to encourage and assist stall traders in promoting their businesses through social media platforms etc. In addition, the FEHD has been maintaining close communication with the stall traders of YMHB. For instance, the FEHD has met with trade representatives and LegCo member in recent months to listen to their views. We will continue to study and implement feasible measures to revitalise YMHB having regard to various factors such as the actual situation of YMHB and opinions of the stakeholders.