

LCQ14: New public market in Tung Chung

Following is a question by the Hon Alice Mak and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (January 6):

Question:

The Chief Executive announced in the 2017 Policy Address that the Government would carry out a project to build a new public market (new market) in Tung Chung. She announced in the 2018 Policy Address that the site selected for the new market was located on the lower floors of a commercial building in Area 6 adjacent to Tung Chung MTR Station. While some residents in the district consider that the siting is not good enough, some other residents are concerned that the project has not commenced after a protracted period of time, resulting in indefinite delay in the completion of the new market. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has consulted the residents in the district so as to grasp to what extent they support the aforesaid siting; if so, of the details and the outcome; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as quite a number of the residents in the district consider that the siting is not good enough and have requested for re-siting, how the Government responds to those views, and whether it will re-site the new market;

(3) of the latest progress of the new market project, and the expected dates for works completion and commissioning; and

(4) as some Tung Chung residents have pointed out that before the commissioning of the new market, the traders need to keep paying high rentals and the residents need to bear heavy living expenses, whether the Government will, by making reference to its practice adopted for Tin Shui Wai, provide a temporary market in Tung Chung before the commissioning of the new market; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Development Bureau, my reply to the question raised by Member is as follows:

(1) to (3) The Government announced in October 2018 the plan to build a new market on the lower floors of a proposed development at the commercial site in Area 6 adjacent to Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Tung Chung Station and consulted the Islands District Council on the site selected and proposed development mode for the market in the same month. The District Council

expressed support to the Government's proposal of constructing a new public market.

In identifying suitable sites for building new markets, consideration will be given to their geographical location, existing/planned uses, usable area and ancillary transport facilities nearby etc., in order to ensure that, upon completion, the markets will be of a substantial scale to attract patrons and that public finances and land resources can be optimised. During the site selection process for the new market, we have considered other sites suggested by the community and opine that the current site in Area 6 adjacent to MTR Tung Chung Station is the most suitable one. The site, being well-connected by public transport, close to the MTR station and a public transport interchange, as well as adjacent to the retail and dining hub in the town centre, is accessible to the public for purchasing fresh provisions.

As the development project at the commercial site in Area 6 is adjacent to railway facilities, the Civil Engineering and Development Department is conducting a further technical feasibility study for the entire commercial building development project (including the new market portion) to ensure that the development project will not affect the safe operation of the MTR. The Government will brief the District Council on the details in a timely manner upon completion of the study.

If the project is confirmed to be technically feasible, the developer will build the commercial building development project through land sale by the Government, including preparing the market design according to the requirements and conditions specified by the Government and building the new market portion.

(4) Constructing a public market requires the use of scarce land resources and entails public financial commitment, both capital and recurrent. In considering whether a public market should be built, we have to duly assess the need for the market and cost-effectiveness and to ensure proper use of public resources.

Public markets, including temporary markets, must also comply with the relevant hygiene and safety requirements. Considerable amount of resources and provision of basic facilities will be required, such as building structures and layouts, electrical installations, water supply system, drainage system, sewage system, ventilation facilities, lighting system, fire safety system, refuse handling facilities, loading and unloading areas, etc. The difficulty in identifying locations for the provision of temporary or permanent markets in developed areas like Tung Chung Town Centre cannot be underestimated. Since temporary markets are transitional arrangements in nature, it is of utmost importance to identify suitable sites which are technically feasible and options which allow completion and commissioning of the market within a short period of time.