

LCQ14: Provision of temporary public markets

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Hoi-dick and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (July 15):

Question:

In view of the fact that the new Tin Shui Wai public market under planning will only be completed in 2027 at the earliest, the Government announced in October last year the plan to provide a temporary market adjacent to Tin Sau Road Park in Tin Shui Wai. The temporary market, which will be built by adopting the "Modular Integrated Construction" approach at a cost of about \$30 million, is expected to commence operation at the end of this year the soonest. Regarding issues relating to the provision of temporary public markets, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the time taken by the Government to conduct the relevant study before it announced last year the plan to provide a temporary market in Tin Shui Wai; whether it has compiled statistics on the shortest time needed for providing a temporary public market from initial thinking to commissioning upon completion;

(2) given that both Tung Chung New Town and Tin Shui Wai are in lack of a public market, and an implementation timetable is not yet available for the provision of a permanent public market in Tung Chung as planned by the Government, whether the Government will, by making reference to the practice it has adopted for Tin Shui Wai, expeditiously provide a temporary public market in Tung Chung New Town to cater for local residents' daily shopping needs in the short run; and

(3) whether it will draw up the criteria for determining the need for the provision of temporary public markets, e.g. that a temporary public market should be provided in a certain district when the need for the provision of a permanent public market in that district has been confirmed but it is impossible for the new market to be commissioned within a certain period of time?

Reply:

President,

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

(1) The Chief Executive announced in the 2018 Policy Address that a new public market would be built at the section of Tin Fuk Road opposite Tin Shui Wai Station of the West Rail Line. Subsequently, we announced in October

2019 the establishment of a temporary market adjacent to Tin Sau Road Park in Tin Shui Wai, so that the public can have an additional choice for purchasing fresh provisions early before the completion of the construction of the new public market. The Modular Integrated Construction method is adopted to shorten the on-site construction time as far as possible, with a view to having the market completed and commissioned early for the benefit of the public. We are pressing ahead with the temporary market project. Subject to the actual progress, it is expected to be completed and commissioned by the end of 2020 at the earliest.

Depending on factors such as scale of works and technical requirements, etc., the time required to take forward individual projects varies from case to case and cannot be generalised.

(2) and (3) The site of the Tung Chung Town Centre new public market will be located on the lower floors of a commercial building in Area 6 adjacent to Tung Chung Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Station. It is planned to be built by the developer of the commercial building and the market design will be prepared by the developer according to the requirements and conditions specified by the Government. The technical feasibility study for the entire development project (including the public market portion) is underway. We will brief the District Council concerned on the project details in a timely manner upon completion of the study. As for the new market project in Tung Chung New Town Extension, the preliminary planning is underway. The project will tie in with the housing development plan of the district. Details of the project will be confirmed upon completion of the preliminary planning.

Providing a public market requires the use of scarce land resources and entails public financial commitment, both capital and recurrent. We have to duly assess the need for the market and cost-effectiveness to ensure proper use of public resources. Whether a temporary market should be built before the commissioning of a permanent public market depends on the actual needs and cost-effectiveness, as well as the availability of suitable sites in the vicinity. Besides, temporary markets will also need to fulfil the relevant hygiene and safety requirements. Considerable amount of resources will be required to provide the basic facilities, such as ceiling, stall partitions, 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 markets in Tung Chung Town Centre and other developed areas cannot be underestimated.