

## LCQ16: Setting up more hawker pitches and bazaars

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Kwok-kin and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (July 8):

Question:

As Hong Kong's economy has been dealt double blows by the social disturbances in the latter half of last year and the epidemic which broke out at the beginning of this year, the unemployment rate has hit a record high in 10 years. Some members of the public have relayed that the Government should proactively create job opportunities, such as by suitably allowing the setting up of more hawker pitches and bazaars. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) launched in September last year a scheme of Reallocation of 435 Vacant Fixed Hawker Pitches and Issue of New Licences, whether FEHD has completed reallocating the pitches and issuing the licences, and the total number of pitches reallocated so far; of the number of persons, among those issued with a licence, who fall into the following category: members of the public satisfying certain basic criteria;

(2) whether FEHD will review the above scheme and report the outcome to the relevant panel of this Council; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether, in the coming three years, it has plans to set up bazaars and new hawker pitches at suitable sites (e.g. the open space adjacent to Wong Tai Sin Temple) in various districts across the territory, and to issue temporary hawker licences, so as to create job opportunities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

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

(1) Regarding the fixed hawker pitches, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) launched the scheme of Re-allocation of Fixed Hawker Pitches and Issue of New Licences in September 2019. Under the scheme, 435 vacant fixed hawker pitches located at seven districts were open for application by persons who are interested in the hawking business and able to meet the required conditions. Successful applicants can operate at the pitches after obtaining a licence.

The FEHD conducted an open computer random sequencing cum manual ballot exercise to determine the priority order of applicants for pitch selection in November 2019 and have been inviting applicants to select vacant pitches since December 2019. The Department's pitch selection and licensing procedures are underway. As at June 30, 2020, 420 hawker pitches were selected, of which 308 applicants are members of the public and 201 applicants already obtained the licences. Those members of the public did not hold any valid hawker licence before the exercise.

(2) The pitch selection and licensing procedures of the scheme is still underway. The FEHD will keep in view the implementation progress of the scheme and the actual operating situation.

(3) The Government adopts an open mind towards specific bottom-up proposals (proposed by local residents/ organisations) for organising bazaars, and has formulated the Application Guidelines for Setting Up Bazaars to set out matters requiring attention for organising bazaars. When suitable sites have been identified by the proponent organisations (i.e. the venue owners have no in-principle objection to the proposed bazaars being held at their venues at the proposed time slots) and support from local communities and respective District Councils have been obtained, provided that the bazaar proposals will not compromise public order and safety, food safety and environmental hygiene, and will not obstruct public passageways, the Government will facilitate liaison with the relevant departments to follow up the proposal.

As for hawkers, the FEHD is implementing the scheme of Re-allocation of Fixed Hawker Pitches and Issue of New Licences. Currently, there is no plan to set up new fixed-pitch hawker areas in individual districts.