

LCQ6: Enhancing the attractiveness of bazaars

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (March 13):

Question:

There are views pointing out that there are still a number of areas in which the competitiveness of bazaars organised under the "Night Vibes Hong Kong" and the "Day x Night Vibes @ 18 Districts" can be strengthened. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that at present, many bazaar stalls only sell pre-cooked dishes or simple food, and there are stringent restrictions in respect of the thresholds for selling food cooked on-site as well as the types of food served, which compare unfavourably to bazaars in the neighbouring regions, whether the Government will study providing stalls with more support for their applications for temporary food factory licences or liquor licences, or adjusting the overly stringent licence requirements, so that the stalls can offer more variety of food and beverages, thereby strengthening the bazaar economy;

(2) whether it will integrate the characteristics of districts as well as local culture and creativity into bazaars, conduct a territory-wide review for areas with potentials for bazaar development, and consider a crossover of the local culture with international cultures or the cultures of other cities in our country, and assign a dedicated department to co-ordinate the relevant matters, so as to establish bazaars and night markets with characteristics and appeal; and

(3) of the attendances, revenue and the numbers of various types of stalls (including stalls involving the heating up of pre-cooked food, stalls involving the cooking of pre-prepared and ready-to-cook food, and stalls selling dry goods) in respect of the bazaars under the Day x Night Vibes@18 Districts; how it assesses the economic benefits of such bazaars, and whether it has reviewed the areas that need further enhancement and improvement?

Reply:

President,

The Government has launched the "Night Vibes Hong Kong" in September 2023. Various departments have collaborated with different organisations to organise a wealth of night-time events showcasing local characteristics and attractions. In the first half of this year, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) has organised a series of diverse leisure and cultural activities under

"Day x Night Vibes @ 18 Districts". The various activities involved bazaars, such as "Temple Street – Endless Authentic Encounters" and "Celebrating the Year of Dragon – Tsuen Wan Lantern Festival Bazaar", reflecting that bazaars can have flexible positioning and content to suit different objectives and themes. Aside from the above, various organisations in the community also organise different types of bazaars from time to time.

In response to the question raised by Hon Ho, after consulting the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau, and the Security Bureau, my reply is as follows:

(1) The Government have all along been providing facilitation to the organisation of bazaar activities and offering necessary assistance to applicants. At present, stalls in a bazaar only need to fulfill some basic requirements for safeguarding food safety and public health (such as whether the venue has electricity supply and suitable food storage and washing facilities) to obtain a temporary food factory licence from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for cooking food from raw ingredients, and selling of food and beverages. Depending on the specific venue facilities, a vast diversity of food and beverages can be sold. For example, there were soufflé pancakes, oyster omelet, and grilled oysters sold at the "Kwun Tong Night Market in the Year of Dragon". The FEHD also provides one-stop service to assist applicants to refer application materials to relevant departments for processing in parallel, so as to facilitate and expedite the application process.

Regarding temporary liquor licences, the Police will proactively contact the applicants to explain the application procedures and the required documents for the licence, and provide professional opinions on venue safety and crowd control. This is to ensure public safety and order meanwhile facilitate the organisation of different activities by the organiser. There are already stalls providing alcoholic beverages in bazaar. The sale of craft beer at the "Waterfront Carnival" in Wan Chai is an example.

(2) In terms of infusing district characteristics and local culture and creativity into bazaars, the "Day x Night Vibes @ 18 Districts" activities organised by the HAD, mainly aim to provide the public with a wide range of cultural and leisure events, and to showcase local diversity or traditional cultural connotations in various districts, so as to promote a vibrant atmosphere in the community. These activities take various forms, including bazaar carnivals, artwork exhibitions, musical performances, and sports experiences.

According to the CSTB, if bazaar organisers are interested in inviting local arts groups to perform at bazaars, they may reach out to the latter through the CSTB and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Arts groups and artists can also apply for subsidy from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council to perform at different venues (including bazaars). Whether bazaars would be infused with local culture and creativity depends on the preference, management arrangements and interest of the bazaar organisers. It also depends on whether the performances/shows of the arts groups and artists are

suitable for the relevant bazaar venues.

As for bazaars organised by different organisations in the community from time to time, the Environment and Ecology Bureau co-ordinated the updated version of the "Resource Handbook for Bazaar Application" that was issued in January this year, covering how to identify suitable venues and apply for hiring government venues (including those under the Housing Authority/Housing Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and the Lands Department), to facilitate interested organisations/persons to have an easier grasp of the relevant application procedures and information.

(3) Under the "Day x Night Vibes @ 18 Districts" organised by the HAD, a series of activities have been rolled out progressively since late January this year. The activities are in diverse forms and context and bazaars is only one of the forms. As of March 6, 2024, there were eight activities with bazaar elements. The activities have successfully boosted the atmosphere in the community, and attracted many citizens to visit, take photos and enjoy the festive atmosphere. General feedback from the stalls has been positive, indicating a high patronage. For example, the bazaar in Kwun Tong recorded 800 000 visitors in 23 days, the one in Wong Tai Sin had 114 000 visitors in three days, and the one in Yuen Long had 120 000 visitors in three days. Stall operators of the bazaars generally expressed satisfaction with their sales, but had not disclosed actual profits due to commercial considerations.

The themes, scale and duration of the bazaars vary, with the number of stalls ranging from more than 20 to about 120. Most of the stalls sell dry goods, and there are also stalls selling cooked food. As of March 3, 2024, the FEHD has issued a total of 111 temporary food factory licences to such bazaar stalls for the sale of food and beverages, including food cooked on site from raw ingredients and pre-prepared food.

Thank you, President.