

LCQ8: Future plans for public wholesale food and fish markets

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (June 20):

Question:

Some members of the public have relayed to me that in the vicinity of certain public wholesale food and fish markets, quite a number of residential developments have been completed in recent years, and the operation of such markets has affected the daily lives of nearby residents. They also hold the view that some of these wholesale markets are well poised to be developed into facilities with tourism appeal. Regarding the future plans for those markets, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will identify suitable locations for the reprovisioning of the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market and the North District Temporary Wholesale Market for Agricultural Products, so that the sites thus vacated can be planned afresh for other uses which will dovetail with community needs; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(2) whether it will, by making reference to successful examples (e.g. the Pike Place Market in Seattle, the United States, the Tsukiji Fish Market in Tokyo, Japan and the Fish Market in Bergen, Norway), study ways to enhance the benefits that may be brought by public wholesale markets, e.g. converting the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market into an integrated facility that brings together a market for trading fisheries products, seafood restaurants and outlets for local products, so as to boost the development of the fisheries industry and the tourism industry; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

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

(1) The Civil Engineering and Development Department has commissioned a technical consultancy study on potential sites for relocating a number of existing wholesale markets (including Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market) and for other industrial uses in North West Tsing Yi. The study is expected to be completed in 2020. The Government will consult relevant stakeholders, having regard to the outcome of the above study and other considerations.

On the other hand, the North District Temporary Wholesale Market for Agricultural Products to be affected by the proposed construction of the Fanling Bypass Eastern Section will be reprovisioned to an adjacent site in phases. Funding approval for the project would be sought from the Legislative Council in the first quarter of 2019.

(2) The aim of establishing wholesale food markets is to facilitate the wholesaling activities of the trade. In considering whether such markets could be used for purposes or hosting public events other than wholesaling, we have to ensure the purpose or event concerned would not affect the normal operation of the markets as well as the safety of the public participating in the events. The primary function of the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market (AWFM) is to provide wholesale services for fish buyers. AWFM is already running in its full capacity. In the past, relevant Government departments had examined if the market could be developed into a tourist spot, but concluded that there lacked a number of elements to make it a success. In addition, in order to provide commercial facilities in AWFM, the safety issue arising from the gathering of a large number of tourists in the market must be properly addressed, and planning and land use approvals have to be obtained. The proposal involves many stakeholders and a variety of complicated technical issues. The proposal's commercial viability as well as attractiveness to operators of restaurants and tourist facilities also have to be considered.