

LCQ3: Weekend bazaars

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hok-fung and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

It is learnt that the Government will allocate resources to the organisation of "weekend bazaars" in collaboration with local groups in different districts this year, so as to foster diversified local economic activities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will compile an "operating manual for weekend bazaars" to publish information on suitable sites in various districts for leasing to operators of weekend bazaars; if so, of the details;

(2) given that there are views that the operation mode of "Zibo barbecue" stalls in Zibo City of Shandong Province is of valuable reference to Hong Kong, whether the Government will, by drawing reference from the experience of Zibo City, incorporate elements of "low spending and no ripping off customers" into weekend bazaars, so that they can stimulate the local economy; and

(3) whether it will draw reference from the experience of organising "Gourmet Marketplaces", such as simplifying the requirements for applying for temporary food factory licences and including the element of gourmet, so as to attract members of the public and tourists to visit weekend bazaars, thereby building Hong Kong as a visitor-friendly city where tourists feel at home?

Reply:

President,

Bazaars generally refer to venues set up on a temporary basis for buying and selling goods within a specific time period. The purpose of organising bazaars varies, some are for promoting local economy and tourism, some for providing opportunities to the grassroots and young people to start short-term businesses, while some for celebrating festival events etc. They may take different forms to serve their respective purposes.

The Government has all along been adopting an open attitude towards bazaars organised by organisations. When suitable sites are identified by interested organisations, relevant bureaux and departments will render facilitation so long as the bazaar proposals do not compromise the principles of maintaining public order, public safety, food safety and environmental hygiene etc, and are supported by local communities. In recent years, various organisations have organised bazaars of different forms and relevant government departments have also organised or supported the organisation of

bazaars in relation to their respective policy objectives, such as the Lunar New Year fairs and FarmFest etc.

In the 2022 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will each organise five weekend bazaars to foster diversified local economic activities. In addition, the Financial Secretary announced in his 2023-24 Budget Speech the launch of the "Happy Hong Kong" Campaign, which would feature the organisation of several Gourmet Marketplaces across the territory to be co-ordinated by the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) to enable public and tourists to enjoy local and overseas gourmet food.

On the questions raised by Hon Chan Hok-fung, after consulting with the HYAB and Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, we would like to reply as follows:

(1) In order to facilitate organisations/individuals who are interested in organising a bazaar to have an easier grasp of the relevant procedures and process involved, relevant policy bureaux and departments are currently updating the "Resource Handbook for Bazaar Application" (the Handbook) to provide information on how to find suitable venues and apply for the use or lease of venues under the Housing Authority/Housing Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Lands Department, including the relevant venue restrictions as well as enquiry and contact points etc; the licences and/or approval required for organising different forms of bazaars and the relevant application methods; how to assess the impact of the event on the local communities and the procedures for consulting them as needed.

As for venues, relevant departments are currently reviewing their respective venues with a view to identifying suitable locations for interested organisations/individuals to apply for organising bazaars on specific dates.

(2) The HYAB/HAD held five weekend markets last year and three "Happy Hong Kong" Gourmet Marketplaces this year without charging rent from the organisers. Admission tickets were distributed for free, and various offers were provided to the visiting public.

The FEHD will hold five weekend bazaars starting from this Thursday (May 25) adopting similar operating modes. It will not collect rent from the organisers or admission fees from public. At the same time, basic venue facilities and promotional assistance will be provided to stalls.

We hope that the above will allow the stalls to operate at a lower cost and encourage them to give back to the community.

(3) The FEHD will draw on the experience of the "Happy Hong Kong" Gourmet Marketplaces co-ordinated by the HYAB/HAD and incorporate gourmet food element in its three weekend bazaars to be held from May 25 to June. The three bazaars will have cooked food stalls to attract more public and visitors to visit and spend. As for the remaining two weekend bazaars to be held later, the FEHD is also actively discussing with co-organisers for the

set-up of cooked food stalls thereat.

If heating-up/warming of pre-cooked food is involved at a temporary stall during a public function, such as a bazaar, the stall owner needs to apply for a temporary food factory licence from the FEHD, which will issue the concerned licence when the applicant meets the specified requirements. The FEHD has been providing assistance and support to temporary food factory licence applicants in relation to organising bazaars. For example, it provides one-stop service to applicants by referring the application information to relevant departments such as the Fire Services Department for processing in parallel, so that applicants do not have to make the same applications to multiple departments, and the processing time for applications can be shortened. At present, the FEHD usually completes the application process within 12 working days. So long as it does not affect food safety, environmental hygiene and the safety of the public at the venue, the FEHD will exercise the greatest flexibility in processing the temporary food factory licences. When necessary, the department will explain the licensing requirements in detail to the event organisers and stall owners to facilitate an accurate understanding of the relevant information, early planning of the class of businesses they will operate and compliance with the licence conditions. In the process of updating the Handbook, the FEHD will streamline procedures such as refining the application forms for bazaars stalls.

Thank you, President.